MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON MILTON

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MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON MILTON

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IOANNES
MILTON
Ætat 62
A° D 1670
Three Poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The First in loftiness of thought surpast;
The Next, in majesty; in both the Last.
The force of Nature could no further go:
To make a Third She joyn'd the former Two.

MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON

MILTON

EDITED AND ANNOTATED

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE essay contained in this volume forms a part of the course prescribed by the Joint Committee on English Requirements for admission to college. While it can hardly be rated as the greatest of Macaulay's essays, there are few, if any, which present a richer field for investigation and study. The student will need to have encyclopædia and dictionaries constantly at hand, and even then he will probably find some allusions and references which will baffle his most patient effort.

In the preparation of the notes the fact has been recognized that many students must take up this work without the necessary reference books; therefore the allusions have been explained much more fully than would otherwise be necessary.

Where it is possible, the student should not depend on the notes for his information, but should look up the references for himself. Much interesting information will be secured, and valuable habits of investigation will be formed by a careful, independent, and exhaustive study of this masterpiece.

INTRODUCTION

In the preparation of the following introductory matter an effort has been made to present only that which will be available and useful to the average student. Critical analyses and discussions have been studiously avoided.

Generally the introduction to a work of this class is carefully skipped by students, and sometimes, no doubt, wisely. Yet there is a certain kind and amount of introductory work which needs to be done in order to prepare the way for the proper study of any author, and it is hoped that the following pages will not altogether fail to meet this necessity.

"His heart was pure and simple as a child's
Unbreathed on by the world: in friendship warm,
Confiding, generous, constant; and now
He ranks among the great ones of the earth,
And hath achieved such glory as will last
To future generations." — *Moultrie.*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Babington Macaulay, the son of Zachary and Selina Mills Macaulay, was born at Rothley Temple, October 25, 1800. His father, a man of strict principles and stern and unyielding integrity, was associated with Wilberforce in his anti-slavery agitation, and spent the larger part of his life in works of charity and philanthropy.

Young Macaulay was a child of such marked maturity of thought and expression that he became noted among the friends of the family for his quaintness and precocity, yet his nature was so frank and wholesome that he escaped the slightest taint of priggishness. Those qualities of person and mind which were marked in his later years appeared very early in life and developed rapidly.

"Madame, the agony has already begun to abate," was the answer of the four-year-old boy to the solicitous inquiry of a lady, when a careless servant spilled some hot coffee on his legs. Not long afterwards he edified a group of visitors in the drawing-room by walking into the room and exclaiming:

"Cursed be Sallie; for it is written, 'Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark.'" This scriptural malediction was directed against a serving

maid who had removed a row of oyster shells with which he had marked out the limits of his playground.

He early formed the habit of holding a piece of bread and butter in his hand, from which he would occasionally take a bite, when he was engaged in study. His mother one day told him he must break up the habit. "Yes, mamma," he replied, "industry shall be my bread and attention my butter."

At the age of eight he had covered a wide range of reading, and had accumulated a large store of knowledge, which his wonderfully retentive memory enabled him to use with considerable facility and force. He soon became accustomed to express his thoughts in both prose and poetry. His marvellously fertile mind began to pour forth its treasures at an age when the average child has not yet learned even to read; and though his earlier productions have not been deemed worthy of preservation, they gave abundant promise of the maturer work with which he was destined to enrich literature for all time.

One of his productions was a paper which was intended to persuade the people of Travancore to embrace the Christian religion, of which his mother says: "On reading it, I found it to contain a very clear idea of the leading facts and doctrines of that religion, with some strong arguments for its adoption. Heroic poems, epics, odes, and histories flowed from his

pen like waters from a mountain spring; and whi
they were often crude and boyish, they were th
spontaneous expressions of a mind which was rapidl
growing into a consciousness of its own productiv
power."

His elementary education was secured at a sma
private school near Cambridge, where his individu
peculiarities were allowed much freedom in their d
velopment, yet with sufficient guidance to coördina
them wisely. At the age of thirteen he wrote:

"The books which I am at present employed
reading to myself are, in English, Plutarch's Liv
and Milner's Ecclesiastical History; in French, Fén
lon's Dialogues of the Dead. I shall send you bac
the volumes of Madame de Genlis's *petit romans*
soon as possible, and should be very much obliged f
one or two more of them."

He also formed a taste for fiction, which he rea
with such eagerness that very few novels in th
English language escaped his eye.

Notwithstanding his literary tastes and his absorptio
in his reading and studies, he never allowed scho
duties to encroach upon his love of home and friends,
to reconcile him to his "exile." At the beginning of h
second half-year at school he writes to his mother:

"My spirits are far more depressed by leaving hon
than they were last half-year. Everything brin

home to my recollection. You told me I should be happy when I once came here, but not an hour passes in which I do not shed tears at thinking of home."

His biographer gives an illustration of his wonderful memory, which is referred to this period. While sitting in a Cambridge coffee-house he picked up a paper and read two poetical effusions which were printed in it, one called "Reflections of an Exile," and the other a parody on a Welsh ballad. He looked them once through, and his mind did not recur to them again for forty years, at the end of which period he was able to repeat them without changing a word. Joined with these retentive powers was the ability to assimilate the contents of a printed page almost at a glance. He would read a whole book while the average reader would be covering a chapter. Nor was this merely "skimming," as he could always repeat the substance of the book from memory afterwards.

He entered upon all branches of study with equal avidity, excepting only mathematics, which he always regarded with intense aversion and pursued only under protest. In regard to this subject he writes home from the University:

"I can scarcely bear to write on mathematics or mathematicians. Oh for words to express my abomination for that science, if a name sacred to the useful and embellishing arts may be applied to the percep-

tion and recollection of certain properties of numbers and figures. Oh that I had to learn astrology, or demonology, or school divinity; oh that I were to pore over Thomas Aquinas, and to adjust the relation of Entity with the two Predicaments, so that I were exempt from this miserable study! 'Discipline' of the mind! Say rather starvation, confinement, torture, annihilation! But it must be. I feel myself becoming a personification of algebra, a living trigonometrical canon, a walking table of logarithms. All my perceptions of elegance and beauty are gone, or at least going. . . . But such is my destiny; and since it is so, be the pursuit contemptible, below contempt, or disgusting beyond abhorrence, I shall aim at no second place."

At Cambridge, as at the preparatory school, he excelled in literary and classical studies and was noted for his ready and somewhat boisterous conversational powers. He early became interested in political questions, and began to participate in political discussions. While at Cambridge he renounced the principles of the Tory party to which his father was attached, and became an ardent Whig, and afterwards became one of the trusted leaders of the party.

In 1819 he won the Chancellor's medal for a poem on "Pompeii," and again in 1820 for a poem entitled "Evening." In 1822 he received his Bachelor's degree,

and in 1824 was elected to a fellowship, which was the more pleasing to him because it brought such deep gratification to his parents.

His first literary efforts were contributed to *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, for which he wrote several articles between June, 1823, and November, 1824. In this latter year he made his début as a public speaker at an anti-slavery meeting, where he seems to have made a considerable impression by his eloquence and exhaustive treatment of the subject.

In 1825 he contributed his essay on "Milton" to the *Edinburgh Review*, and for twenty years after he was a constant writer for this celebrated magazine. His "Milton" brought him wide renown, and made his name familiar to a wide circle of readers. While his work was scholarly, it was also popular and intensely interesting. Probably no other writer of the present century has so taken the world by storm as did Macaulay. The circulation of the *Review* increased with unexampled rapidity. In America his essays were reprinted in editions both cheap and expensive, and were not only sold in large quantities here but even found a large sale in the mother country.

Macaulay imparted to his writings a peculiar charm from which even the casual reader cannot escape. His wide reading and wonderful memory enabled him to range the whole field of literature and history for his

illustrations and allusions, and also to impart a large amount of information, which, if not always strictly accurate, was invested in such picturesque and beautiful language that it appealed directly to the higher tastes of his readers and did much to quicken their intellectual life.

In 1825 he received his Master's degree, and in 1826 was called to the bar, but he very soon abandoned his attempt to practise law and gave himself up to his literary work and to the pursuit of politics.

His articles in the *Edinburgh Review* brought him a wide popularity, which, added to his powerful advocacy of Whig principles, made it possible for him to enter Parliament, and in 1830 he was returned from the borough of Colne.

His first speech was in favor of a bill to remove the civil disabilities of the Jews, and his second was directed against slavery in the West Indies. He also took a prominent part in the great debate on the Reform Bill, and contributed materially to its final adoption.

From this time his position, both in politics and society, was assured. He was probably the most prominent and influential member of his party in the House and was always listened to with interest and respect. He won renown not only for the eloquence and power of his speeches, but also for his readiness in debate.

His great stores of information and his exhaustless memory both combined to make him invincible in the hot battles that were then waged in Parliament.

On July 10, 1833, he made an effective speech in favor of an important measure then under consideration, at the close of which one of the administration leaders gave utterance to his admiration in the following words:

"I must embrace the opportunity of expressing, not what I felt (for language could not express it), but of making an attempt to convey to the House my sympathy with it in its admiration of the speech of my honorable and learned friend: a speech which, I will venture to assert, has never been exceeded within these walls for the development of statesman-like policy and practical good sense. It exhibited all that is noble in oratory; all that is sublime, I had almost said, in poetry; all that is truly great, exalted, and virtuous in human nature. If the House at large felt a deep interest in this magnificent display, it may judge of what were my emotions when I perceived in the hands of my honorable friend the great principles which he expounded glowing with fresh colors and arrayed in all the beauty of truth."

This generous tribute expressed no more than the common estimate of Macaulay's eloquence and logical power.

In 1834 he was made president of a new Law Commission for India and member of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. The salary attached to these positions was large, and during his three years' residence in India he was enabled to acquire a competency which made him independent for the rest of his life.

While in India he found time to continue his studies, and also to write several of his brilliant essays. It was at this time that he acquired the knowledge of Oriental life and history, which he afterwards used so effectively in his essays on Warren Hastings and Lord Clive.

In 1838 he returned to England, and was at once elected to Parliament from Edinburgh. From 1839 to 1841 he was Secretary of War and occupied a seat in the Cabinet. In 1842 he surprised the public by turning aside from his usual style of composition and publishing the "Lays of Ancient Rome," which at once became immensely popular, and have remained so to the present day, despite the fact that they have been condemned by critics as neither poetry nor history. In 1844 he wrote his last essay for the *Review* and then gave himself up to the preparation of his *History of England from the Time of James II.*, the first two volumes of which appeared in 1849. The event of their publication had been eagerly anticipated by the public, and they sold so rapidly that the

publishers could hardly keep pace with the demand. The third and fourth volumes were not ready until 1855.

In 1847 he was defeated for reëlection to Parliament, but in 1852 was returned by his Edinburgh constituency without any effort on his part; but he took little part in the struggles and deliberations of that body.

During the latter part of Macaulay's life many distinguished honors were conferred upon him. In 1849 he was elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow and Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1857 he was made a peer of the realm, under the title of Baron Macaulay of Rothley. In this same year he was elected Foreign Member of the French Academy, was given the Prussian Order of Merit, and was made High Steward of Cambridge. But his hard and unremitting labor had undermined his naturally strong constitution, and he died, December 28, 1859, when hardly past the prime of life.

THE ESSAYS

As a form of literature the essay is a relatively short disquisition upon some particular point or topic. It is not as formal and methodical as the more digni-

fied treatise, and instead of giving a thorough and complete treatment of its subject, is comparatively superficial, and is designed, as a rule, to appeal to the popular taste rather than to the more limited circle of scholarly and profound thinkers for whom the treatise is primarily designed.

The essay offers an opportunity for the bright and witty thinker to discourse confidentially upon subjects in which he is interested without being required to give to them an orderly and exhaustive treatment, or to make his work conform rigidly to all the canons of literary criticism.

In the essay, more than in any other impersonal form of literary effort, the author is able to impress his own personality upon his work, so that oftentimes it assumes the freedom and variety and is often characterized by the individuality of the conversational monologue. It needs no profound student of literature to recognize at once the author in such essays as those of Bacon, Addison, Macaulay, or Matthew Arnold.

This species of composition has been a favorite one from the time of Bacon, the great English philosopher, and Montaigne, the greatest French writer of the sixteenth century, who were the first of modern writers to use it distinctively. It is especially adapted to periodical literature, and if it has not risen to its

highest level, it has, at any rate, appeared in its most agreeable and attractive form, in such publications as the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Edinburgh Review*. It has been used as the vehicle for historical and biographical sketches, literary and critical discussions, political arguments, and ethical and religious expositions. It has generally been written in prose, although Pope, in his essays on "Man" and "Criticism," has shown that it may appear in poetic form, without loss of freshness or vigor.

Some authors, like Addison and Steele, have produced the most of their literary work in this form, while others, like Cowley, have used it as a diversion, and have gained their reputation in other fields of literature.

To the scholar essay-writing may seem to be a form of literary dissipation, which, persisted in, will make the writer incapable of close and sustained work along any single line. Whether this be true or not, it is certain that the essay has influenced beneficially a wider class of readers than any other form of composition outside of fiction, and even fiction has done much less to disseminate useful information and to inspire thoughtful consideration of great questions.

Unlike poetry and fiction, the modern essay has not undergone a process of evolution. In its essential characteristics it has not changed materially since its

first appearance in the sixteenth century. A comparison between the essays of Bacon and Montaigne and those of almost any modern writer will show differences in the personal standpoint and style of treatment, but the essential elements of composition remain the same. The essay, like Athena, sprang full-grown and fully armed into the world of literature, and took its place at once as a finished and perfected product.

The essays of Macaulay, which are probably the most brilliant in the whole range of literature, were contributed mainly to the *Edinburgh Review*, a journal which had risen to an unequalled height of political, social, and literary power. To have the entry of its columns was to command the most direct channel for the spread of opinions and the shortest road to influence and celebrity.

Many of these essays were nominally book reviews, and were generally suggested by some book, whose unfortunate author found himself completely overshadowed by his sometimes friendly, but frequently hostile, critic. In reality these productions are brilliant essays, biographical, historical, and literary, and sometimes, though not often, really critical. Macaulay's sympathy was too easily aroused, and his partisanship was too intense to permit him to employ either the cool temper of the critic or the calm impartiality of the historian.

In the course of his reading Macaulay had accumulated an immense quantity and variety of facts, which his great retentive powers placed at his service whenever he wanted to use them. Thus his essays became exhaustless storehouses of information gathered from all fields of human learning and compacted with great ingenuity and skill into literary masterpieces. Although he composed with great rapidity, he never wrote carelessly or hastily. He gives an insight into his literary methods in a letter written to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* from Calcutta, November 26, 1836, from which the following passage is taken:[1]

"At last I send you an article of interminable length on Lord Bacon. I hardly know whether it is not too long for an article in the *Review*, but the subject is of such vast extent that I could easily have made the paper twice as long as it is. About the historical and political part there is no great probability that we shall differ in opinion; but what I have said about Bacon's philosophy is widely at variance with what Dugald Stewart and Mackintosh have said on the same subject. . . . My opinion is formed not at second hand, like those of nine-tenths of the people who talk about Bacon; but after several very attentive perusals of his greatest works and after a great deal of thought. . . . I never bestowed so much care on

[1] See Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay*, Vol. I., p. 47.

anything I have written. There is not a sentence in the latter half of the article which has not been repeatedly recast."

Macaulay never intended to put his essays into permanent form, and several times refused the request of his publishers to collect and edit them. But finally the popular demand became so great that American publishers issued unauthorized editions, which found a ready sale in England as well as in America. Influenced by this fact, he finally consented to edit and publish an authorized edition, to which he attached the following preface:

"The author of these essays is so sensible of their defects that he has repeatedly refused to let them appear in a form which might seem to indicate that he thought them worthy of a permanent place in English literature; nor would he now give his consent to the re-publication of pieces so imperfect, if, by withholding his consent, he could make re-publication impossible. But as they have been reprinted more than once in the United States, as many American copies have been imported into this country, and as a still larger importation is expected, he conceives that he cannot, in justice to the publishers of the *Edinburgh Review*, longer object to a measure which they consider as necessary to the protection of their rights, and that he cannot be accused of presumption

for wishing that his writings, if they are read, may be read in an edition freed at least from errors of the press and from slips of the pen. . . .

"No attempt has been made to remodel any of the pieces which are contained in these volumes. Even the criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, still remains overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament. The blemishes which have been removed were, for the most part, blemishes caused by unavoidable haste. The author has sometimes, like other contributors to periodical works, been under the necessity of writing at a distance from all books and from all advisers, often trusting to his memory for facts, dates, and quotations, and of often sending manuscripts to the post without reading them over. What he has composed thus rapidly has often been as rapidly printed. His object has been that every essay should now appear as it probably would have appeared when it was first published, if he had been allowed an additional day or two to revise the proof-sheets with the assistance of a good library."

THE LITERARY HISTORY OF MACAULAY'S AGE[1]

A CONSIDERABLE number of England's most noted writers flourished during the life of Macaulay. At his birth the greatest poets of the preceding century were still in the fulness of their powers, while at his death the authors who have been so intimately connected with the glory of Victorian literature had already begun that brilliant work which has made this the most noteworthy period in the whole range of English literature.

With few exceptions, the greatest English poets belong to the nineteenth century. During its first quarter the world was dazzled by the genius of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Southey, Keats, and Shelley; and they had hardly passed from the stage when the first works of Browning and Tennyson were produced.

[1] The Joint Committee on English Requirements, at its session in New York in 1897, recommended teaching the literary history of the various periods to which the prescribed books belong, in connection with their study. No attempt is made here even to sketch the literary history of this period further than is necessary to furnish a background or, what may be so called, a literary setting for Macaulay's works. A more extended study of the general features of the period may be carried on with profit; yet it should not be forgotten that the great purpose of all literary study should be found in the thought of the author, and not in the details of his life history.

The history of this century contains the names of nearly all of the great masters of English fiction, of whom Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton, Miss Edgeworth, Charlotte Bronté, and Miss Austen were contemporary with Macaulay.

Two writers of his period may be fairly classed with our author, although they differed widely from him in many essential characteristics. These were De Quincey and Carlyle, who, with Macaulay, will easily rank among the greatest of English essayists.

Like Macaulay, De Quincey began his literary career by contributing to periodical literature, but, unlike him, he also ended it there; and he has the distinction of being the only great English prose writer who never wrote a book. Few writers since the time of Aristotle have covered so broad a field, and fewer still have proved themselves so thoroughly at home in every department of human thought and investigation, yet he never sustained any line of thought or investigation long enough to produce a work which may be called a real contribution to the intellectual life of the world. The literary value of his works is great, and in beauty and grace, as well as dignity, his style is hardly excelled; yet he cannot be ranked among the great masters of English thought.

In this respect De Quincey was distinctly inferior to Macaulay and Carlyle, each of whom engaged in

exhaustive research, and produced works that have enriched literature for all time.

Many points of resemblance will be discovered between De Quincey and Macaulay from a comparative study of their works. They were both indefatigable readers, and possessed wonderfully retentive powers. Both wrote for magazines on a wide range of topics. Each was gifted with peculiar beauties of style and with a remarkable exuberance of thought; but in their personal characteristics they were at the antipodes. The one was retiring, introspective, and morbid; the other was a man of affairs, and gifted with the power of leadership. Both were masters of the now almost forgotten art of conversation.

Between Macaulay and Carlyle there were few resemblances and fewer elements of sympathy. They were both great prose writers, and interested in the same general class of subjects. Each was attracted to the study of history, and particularly to questions relating to political and social conditions; but their view points were essentially antagonistic. The one was an interested participator in the political activities of his times, and conducted his historical studies and investigations from the standpoint of a partisan, while the other was a philosopher, and almost a recluse.

Yet while Macaulay is more attractive and, by the

ordinary reader, much more easily understood and sympathized with, Carlyle is much the stronger character, and his work has influenced English thought more profoundly.

Macaulay's greatest work is read to-day more for the brilliancy of his style and the power and realism of his characterizations than for the accuracy of his judgments or his contributions to historical knowledge. On the other hand, Carlyle's *Cromwell* is not only good history, but it has reversed the judgment of the English people, and led to the recognition of its hero as the second founder of English liberties. His *French Revolution* and *Frederick the Great* are perhaps the most noteworthy works of their class in the English language, and the latter practically exhausts the historical materials of the period. Yet his most characteristic work is found in his literary and critical essays, which rise to a higher intellectual plane than any which preceded them, and have probably not been excelled by any similar productions in the whole range of literature.

Among the poets who were strictly contemporary with Macaulay were Byron, Shelley, Keats, Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. The last three were born between 1770 and 1775, but the greater part of their work was done during Macaulay's lifetime. All may be ranked among England's greatest poets. "Kubla Khan," "Christabel," and "The Ancient Mariner" by

Coleridge, the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" and "Lines written at Tintern Abbey" by Wordsworth, and the "Lyrics" of Shelley are among the noblest products of poetic genius to be found in any language.

Another famous contemporary was Sydney Smith, the greatest of English wits, of whom Macaulay speaks characteristically in one of his letters as follows:

"The other day as I was changing my neckcloth, which my wig had disfigured, my good landlady knocked at the door of my bedroom and told me that Mr. Smith wished to see me, and was in my room below. Of all names by which men are called there is none which conveys a less determinate idea to the mind than that of Smith. . . . Down I went, and, to my utter amazement, beheld the Smith of Smiths, Sydney Smith, alias Peter Plymley. I had forgotten his very existence till I discerned the queer contrast between the clerical amplitude of his person and the most unclerical wit, whim, and petulance of his eye. . . . I am very well pleased at having this opportunity of becoming better acquainted with a man who, in spite of innumerable affectations and oddities, is certainly one of the wittiest and most original writers of our times. . . . I have really taken a great liking to him. He is full of wit, humor, and shrewdness. He is not one of the show-talkers who reserve all their good things for special occasions. It seems to

be his greatest luxury to keep his wife and daughters laughing for two or three hours every day."

In the course of Macaulay's life he came into close personal acquaintance not only with political leaders, but with many of the more noted authors of his time. Many allusions to them occur in his letters, which are interesting, as they indicate his mental attitude towards writers whose standing was not at that time established. A few of these allusions are quoted below.[1]

"*Pride and Prejudice* and the five sister novels remained without a rival in his affections. He never for a moment wavered in his allegiance to Miss Austen. In 1858 he wrote in his journal: 'If I could get materials I really would write a short life of that wonderful woman, and raise a little money to put up a monument to her in Winchester Cathedral.'"

In a letter to his sister he says:

"I am glad you have read Madame de Staël's *Allemagne*. The book is a foolish one in many respects, but it abounds with information and shows great mental power. She was certainly the first woman of her age; Miss Edgeworth, I think, the second; and Miss Austen the third."

[1] These allusions and many more may be found in Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay*, which is one of the few great biographies in the English language. Every student of Macaulay ought to be familiar with this work.

Of Lord Byron he says:

"The worst thing that I know about Lord Byron is the very unfavorable impression he made upon men who certainly were not inclined to judge him harshly, and who, as far as I know, were never personally ill-used by him. I have heard hundreds and thousands of people, who never saw him, rant about him; but I never heard a single expression of fondness for him fall from the lips of any of those who knew him well."

The following extract from a letter to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* is especially interesting:

Oct. 19, 1842.

"*Dear Napier:* This morning I received Dickens's book. I have now read it. It is impossible for me to review it; nor do I think you would wish me to do so. I cannot praise it, and I will not cut it up. I cannot praise it though it contains a few lively dialogues and descriptions; for it seems to me to be on the whole a failure. . . . A reader who wants an amusing account of the United States had better go to Mrs. Trollope, coarse and malignant as she is. A reader who wants information about American politics, manners, and literature had better go even to so poor a creature as Buckingham. In short, I pronounce the book, in spite of some gleams of genius, at once frivolous and dull.

"Therefore I shall not praise it. Neither will I

attack it; first, because I have eaten salt with Dickens; secondly, because he is a good man and a man of real talent; thirdly, because he hates slavery as heartily as I do; and fourthly, because I wish to see him enrolled in our blue and yellow corps, where he may do excellent service as a skirmisher and sharpshooter."

He had a great admiration for Miss Edgeworth, the accomplished author of *Castle Rackrent, Ormond, Moral Tales,* etc.

"Among all the incidents connected with the publication of his History, nothing pleased Macaulay so much as the gratification which he contrived to give Maria Edgeworth, as a small return for the enjoyment which, during more than fifty years, he had derived from her charming writings. That lady, who was in her eighty-third winter and within a few months of her death, says, in the course of a letter addressed to Dr. Holland: 'And now, my good friend, I require you to believe that all the admiration I have expressed for Macaulay's work is quite uninfluenced by the self-satisfaction, pride, surprise, I had in finding my own name in a note! I had formed my opinion, and expressed it to my friends who were reading the book to me, before I came to that note. Moreover, there was a mixture of shame, and a tinge of pain, with the pleasure and pride I felt in having a line in

this immortal History given to *me*, when there is no mention of Sir Walter Scott throughout the work, even in places where it seems impossible that the historian should resist paying the becoming tribute which genius owes, and loves to pay, to genius. . . . Meanwhile be so good as to make my grateful and deeply felt thanks to the great author for the honor which he has done me.'"

Perhaps this omission may be explained by the following passage from a letter to Mr. Napier. His estimate of the personal character of Scott is widely at variance with the facts as known to us.

"Then, again, I have not, from the little I do know about him, formed so high an opinion of his character as most people seem to entertain, and as it would be expedient for the *Edinburgh Review* to express. He seems to me to have been most carefully and successfully on his guard against the sins which most easily beset literary men. On that side he multiplied his precaution, and set a double watch. Hardly any writer of note has been so free from the petty jealousies and morbid irritabilities of our caste. But I do not think that he kept himself equally pure from faults of a very different kind, from the faults of a man of the world. In politics, a bitter and unscrupulous partisan; profuse and ostentatious in expense; agitated by the hopes and fears of a gambler; perpet-

ually sacrificing the perfection of his compositions, and the durability of his fame, to his eagerness for money; writing with the slovenly haste of Dryden, in order to satisfy wants which were not, like those of Dryden, caused by circumstances beyond his control, but which were produced by his extravagant waste or rapacious speculation; this is the way in which he appears to me. I am sorry for it, for I sincerely admire the greater part of his works; but I cannot think him a high-minded man, or a man of very strict principle."

With this unfavorable estimate of Scott by Macaulay it is interesting to compare that of the great critic, Taine, which is illustrated by the following extracts:

"He (Sir Walter Scott) is a good Protestant, a good husband, a good father and very moral. . . . In critical refinement and benevolent philosophy, he resembles Addison. He resembles him again by the purity and endurance of his moral principles. His amanuensis, Mr. Laidlaw, told him that he was doing great good by his attractive and noble tales, and that young people would no longer wish to look in the literary rubbish of the circulating libraries. When Walter Scott heard this, his eyes filled with tears. On his death-bed he said to his son-in-law: 'Lockhart, I have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man,—be virtuous, be religious, be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when

you come to lie here.' This was almost his last word. By this fundamental honesty and this broad humanity, he was the Homer of modern citizen life."

It is possible that Macaulay's judgment may have been biased by the fact that while he was an ardent Whig, Scott was an equally ardent Tory.

PROMINENT AUTHORS WHO WERE CONTEMPORARY WITH MACAULAY.

Walter Savage Landor	1775–1864
Jane Austen	1775–1817
Maria Edgeworth	1767–1849
Sydney Smith	1771–1845
Leigh Hunt	1784–1859
Thomas Carlyle	1795–1881
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	1806–1861
Edward Bulwer (Lord Lytton)	1805–1873
Alfred Tennyson	1809–1892
Charles Dickens	1812–1870
Robert Browning	1812–1889
William M. Thackeray	1811–1863
Lord Byron	1788–1824
Percy B. Shelley	1792–1822
Thomas De Quincey	1785–1859
John Keats	1795–1821
Southey	1774–1843
Coleridge	1772–1834
Wordsworth	1770–1850
Scott	1771–1832

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

READING to be profitable must be careful and intelligent. The careless and hasty reader not only fails to gain the knowledge and culture which are the legitimate products of all reading, but even dissipates his intellectual energies, and eventually destroys his ability to appreciate good literature. That method of reading only is intelligent which leads to a clear comprehension of the author's spirit and intent; and its necessary conditions are a knowledge of his style and vocabulary and such a warm interest in the development of his line of thought and investigation as will serve for an inspiration to a careful and earnest study of his works.

Much that is written in literary form is not worth the reading, but no true work of literature will ever fail to repay the student for his labor upon it. The wise selection of a course of reading is therefore a matter of the highest importance; yet there are so many prepared lists and helpful suggestions which

are easily accessible that no earnest student need go astray.

Before beginning the study of an author it is well to learn something about his character and the position which he occupies in the literary history of his age. Oftentimes a knowledge of his personal life will lead to a better comprehension of his works. Such study should not be minute, and must be taken up not merely to satisfy curiosity, but with the sustained purpose of ascertaining, as far as possible, the sources of his inspiration and the general character and trend of his thought.

Many authors who are thought to be obscure by the general reader are so only because their spirit and motives are not understood, and therefore their literary productions seem illogical, and sometimes almost or quite meaningless. Browning, who is one of the richest and most fruitful of modern writers, furnishes a good illustration of this fact. The ordinary reader fails to understand him because he does not even apprehend his real personality and truest and deepest purposes; and thus his language, which is so heavily laden with the rarest treasures of thought, becomes unintelligible.

The student who is seeking to develop a love for good literature should never cultivate a critical or censorious spirit. His aim should be to search for the true and

the beautiful, and not to be on the lookout for faults and blemishes. The acquisition of such a critical spirit must invariably blind the student to those very elements which alone are worth his study.

If the student searches for faults in Macaulay's works he will surely find them, and often flagrant ones; but his aim should be far different from this. It is true that an intelligent reading of either Macaulay's Essays or his History cannot fail to disclose his faults; but these should be passed over with as little notice as possible, and the attention concentrated upon the beauties of his style and thought. Aside from their brilliancy, there is a peculiarly magnetic quality in Macaulay's works which at once wins the reader and brings him into close sympathy with their author. The student who studies him with an earnest purpose will soon find himself under the sway of his magic, and his works will be invested with an almost irresistible interest.

It is a fundamental principle of all literary study that the student should first gain a fair knowledge of the work as a whole, the general trend of reasoning, and the conclusions which the author desires to establish, before proceeding to an analytical and detailed study. So in taking up these essays the student should first read them through carefully without stopping to look up references or to verify allusions, in order to

gain a general view of the whole field. Then he should turn back and begin a more or less exhaustive study of the essay, giving his attention mainly to the author's style and vocabulary, and to its general content.

Macaulay's vocabulary was noted chiefly for its wide extent and for his good taste in the use of words. He displays no eccentricities, nor does he employ unusual or provincial forms of speech. In his choice of words he is both dignified and graceful. These and other characteristics should be carefully noted, but too much time should not be devoted to the study of words in this or in any other masterpiece. It must always be remembered that words are but the instruments by which thought is expressed, and only enough time should be given to their study to enable the student to master the intricacies of the author's thought. It is the living spirit which quickens, and words are but the vehicles by which it is conveyed.

The second subject of study is the author's style, and it offers a most fruitful field for interesting and profitable investigation. Few authors have been characterized by a style at once so brilliant and so clear; so florid and picturesque, and yet so simple and direct. His essays abound in imagery, comparisons, contrasts, and allusions. From his boundless stores of information he draws copiously and with marked spontaneity

illustrations of his subject which cover the widest possible range of human thought and life. He knows not only the great events and personages of the world's history and literature, but he evinces a remarkable familiarity with persons and deeds so inconspicuous as hardly to find mention in the most detailed annals of the past. The student who conscientiously follows out each allusion and illustration in any one of his greater essays will have to search through many dictionaries, encyclopædias, and histories, and will acquire no small fund of useful and interesting information. And whoever does this will gain some idea of the wide range of reading, the indefatigable industry, and the marvellous memory of the author, who wrote many of these essays, as he himself says, afar from books and libraries, without an opportunity even to verify the references with which his memory supplied him so bountifully.

The student should study carefully the various constructive devices which he employs to convey his meaning, such as the balanced and periodical sentence; the antithetical and climactic forms of expression; and the numerous rhetorical figures, such as pathos, the various forms of comparison and contrast, humor, hyperbole, irony, etc., all of which he frequently uses with power and effect. Numerous illustrations of all of these and others may be found in each essay, and

they should be identified and studied both analytically and constructively.

His style may be characterized briefly as clear, simple, animated, and strong. It has sometimes been called artificial, but the true lover of Macaulay will find it the natural and artistic expression of his sympathetic mind, and not a series of labored devices to attract readers or impress his points. In the long run the popular verdict of a writer is the true one. Critics may still carp and cavil at the author of "Milton" and "The Lays," but by the popular tribunal he has been acquitted of their charges and placed forever among the great masters of thought and expression which the English-speaking world has produced.

The last and most important topic of study is found in an author's purposes and the steps by which he attains them. And here the easiest and by far the most interesting part of the work is reached in a study of Macaulay.

In his expression he is always clear and frank. No matter how radical his views, he never fears to utter them. He never indulges in obscurities or subtleties of thought. His opinions never lack definition; and he never fails to express them so clearly that they cannot be misunderstood, and so forcibly that it seems almost presumption to attempt to discredit them. It is true that he is so vigorous a thinker, and becomes so

absorbed in the subject with which he is dealing at the moment, that he tends towards radical and exaggerated views, so that his subject becomes unduly exalted and the things with which he compares or contrasts it correspondingly depreciated. But it is by no means a harmful thing for a young person to come into an intimate acquaintance with a man who can be at one moment an impetuous lover and at the next moment a violent hater, and one who is not afraid to express his opinions and is never at a loss for vigorous language to clothe them in.

After having read the essay as a whole, the student should carefully look up and verify all its allusions and references, re-reading it in the light of his increased knowledge and expanded horizon. He should then make a paragraph summary, that is, he should express the main idea of each paragraph in a single pointed sentence, in proper order. From this summary he should proceed to make a skeleton of the essay by selecting the most important points, expanding them, and joining to them in their proper order and relationship the minor or subordinate elements, until a complete outline of the whole essay has been formed.

This outline should then be studied, point by point, to ascertain whether Macaulay developed his thought in a careful and logical manner; whether he followed his line of argument closely or indulged in digressions;

whether the system of paragraphing is continuous and harmonious or is characterized by abrupt changes; whether the thought is expressed in plain language or in figured speech, and if so how the meaning is modified or expanded; does he in any point exaggerate or take a false position, and finally, having defined his purpose, has he attained it?

If this method of study is carefully followed out, and supplemented by a wider reading of Macaulay's works, it is believed that the student will not only be benefited intellectually, but that something of the author's strong sweet spirit will enter into his life to broaden and elevate it.

LORD MACAULAY'S PROSE WRITINGS, WITH DATE OF PUBLICATION.

Fragments of a Roman Tale. June, 1823.
On the Royal Society of Literature. June, 1823.
Scenes from Athenian Revels. January, 1824.
Criticisms of the Principal Italian Writers, No. I., Dante. January, 1824.
Criticisms of the Principal Italian Writers, No. II., Petrarch. April, 1824.
Some Account of the Great Lawsuit between the Parishes of St. Dennis and St. George in the Water. April, 1824.
A Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War. August, 1824.
On the Athenian Orators. August, 1824.
A Prophetic Account of a Grand National Epic Poem, to be entitled "The Wellingtoniad," and to be published A.D. 2824. November, 1824.
On Mitford's History of Greece. November, 1824.

NOTE. — Up to this time his essays were published in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, but all the rest appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*.

Milton. August, 1825.
The West Indies. January, 1825.
The London University. February, 1826.
Machiavelli. March, 1827.
Social and Industrial Capacities of Negroes. March, 1827

The Present Administration. June, 1827.
John Dryden. January, 1828.
History. May, 1828.
Hallam's Constitutional History. September, 1828.
Mill on Government. March, 1829.
Westminster Reviewer's Defence of Mill. June, 1829.
Utilitarian Theory of Government. October, 1829.
Southey's Colloquies on Society. January, 1830.
Mr. Robert Montgomery's Poems. April, 1830.
Sadler's Law of Population. July, 1830.
Southey's Edition of Pilgrim's Progress. December, 1830.
Sadler's Refutation Refuted. January, 1831.
Civil Disabilities of the Jews. January, 1831.
Moore's Life of Lord Byron. June, 1831.
Croker's Edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson. September, 1831.
Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden. December, 1831.
Rev. Edward Nave's Memoirs of Lord Burleigh. April, 1832.
Étienne Dumont's Memoirs of Mirabeau. July, 1832.
Lord Mahon's History of the War of the Succession in Spain. January, 1833.
Horace Walpole. October, 1833.
William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. January 1834.
Sir James Mackintosh. July, 1835.
Lord Bacon. July, 1837.
Sir William Temple. October, 1838.
Gladstone on Church and State. April, 1839.
Lord Clive. January, 1840.
Von Ranke. October, 1840.
Leigh Hunt. January, 1841.
Lord Holland. July, 1841.
Warren Hastings. October, 1841.

Frederick the Great. April, 1842.
Madame D'Arblay. January, 1843.
The Life and Writings of Addison. July, 1843.
Barrere. April, 1844.
The Earl of Chatham. October, 1844.

NOTE.—The following biographies were contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

Francis Atterbury. December, 1853.
John Bunyan. May, 1854.
Oliver Goldsmith. February, 1856.
Samuel Johnson. December, 1856.
William Pitt. January, 1859.

In addition to these essays he wrote upwards of eighty short biographical sketches of persons more or less noted.

In 1848 he published the first two volumes of his *History of England from the Accession of James II.*

In 1852 the third and fourth volumes appeared. He was engaged in the preparation of the fifth volume, when he died.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

Epitaph on Henry Martyn.
Lines to the Memory of Pitt.
A Radical War-Song.

The Battle of Moncontour.
The Battle of Naseby.
Sermon in a Churchyard.
Translation from A. V. Arnault.
Dies Irae.
The Marriage of Tirzah and Ahirad.
The Country Clergyman's Trip to Cambridge.
Song.
Political Georgics.
The Deliverance of Vienna.
The Last Buccaneer.
Epitaph on a Jacobite.
Lines written in August, 1847.
Translation from Plautus.
Paraphrase.
Inscription on the Statue of Lord William Bentinck.
Epitaph on Sir Benjamin Heath Malkin.
Epitaph on Lord Metcalfe.
Pompeii.
The Battle of Ivry.
The Armada.
The Cavalier's March to London.
The Lays of Ancient Rome:
- Horatius.
- The Battle of the Lake Regillus.
- Virginia.
- The Prophecy of Capys.

THE ESSAY ON MILTON

This essay was the first of the long list of brilliant compositions which Macaulay contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, and in some respects was the most notable. It is to be studied, not as a critical or historical production, but as a fervent personal plea for a poet and man of whom the English people of that age knew little and cared less. For Milton as a poet Macaulay had a profound admiration, which yielded in fervency only to his affection for him as a man, and his glowing enthusiasm and brilliant panegyric may excuse his failure as a critic and interpreter of Milton's art. As Carlyle rescued Cromwell from the infamy to which he had been consigned, and gained him a deserved recognition as the greatest of English statesmen and generals, so Macaulay corrected the false judgment which had been passed on Milton and his works through the influence of Johnson's misleading Life and restored him to his rightful position as the greatest, save one, of English poets.

Some passages of this essay are among the most striking and beautiful to be found in the whole range of English prose, notably the passages in which he describes the Puritans and Cavaliers. But his treat-

ment of Milton's poetry, and his remarks upon the theory of poetry, are altogether misleading and should not be accepted. They will, however, afford opportunities for much profitable study and discussion.

The student should have at hand some standard life of Milton, to which he should refer freely during the study of this essay. Masson's Life is by far the best of the numerous biographies of Milton.

MACAULAY'S ESSAY ON MILTON

MILTON [1]

(*Edinburgh Review*, August, 1825)

Towards the close of the year 1823, Mr. Lemon,° deputy keeper of the state papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were found corrected copies of the foreign despatches written by Milton, while he filled the office of Secretary,° and several papers relating to the Popish Trials° and the Rye-house Plot.° The whole was wrapped up in an envelope, superscribed *To Mr. Skinner, Merchant.*° On examination, the large manuscript proved to be the long-lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which, according to Wood and Toland,° Milton finished after the Restoration, and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political

[1] *Joannis Miltoni Angli, de Doctrinâ Christianâ libri duo posthumi.* A Treatise on Christian Doctrine, compiled from the Holy Scriptures alone. By John Milton, translated from the original by Charles R. Sumner, M.A., etc., etc. 1825.

Note. — This character (°) placed after a word indicates a reference to the notes.

opinions with his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as Mr. Lemon conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the government during that persecution of the Whigs° which followed the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament,° and that, in consequence of a general seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.

Mr. Sumner,° who was commanded by his Majesty to edit and translate the treatise, has acquitted himself of his task in a manner honorable to his talents and to his character. His version is not indeed very easy or elegant; but it is entitled to the praise of clearness and fidelity. His notes abound with interesting quotations, and have the rare merit of really elucidating the text. The preface is evidently the work of a sensible and candid man, firm in his own religious opinions, and tolerant towards those of others.

The book itself will not add much to the fame of Milton. It is, like all his Latin works, well written, though not exactly in the style of the prize essays of Oxford and Cambridge. There is no elaborate imitation of classical antiquity, no scrupulous purity, none

of the ceremonial cleanness which characterizes the diction of our academical Pharisees. The author does not attempt to polish and brighten his composition into the Ciceronian gloss and brilliancy. He does not, in short, sacrifice sense and spirit to pedantic refinements. The nature of his subject compelled him to use many words

"That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp."°

But he writes with as much ease and freedom as if Latin were his mother tongue; and, where he is least happy, his failure seems to arise from the carelessness of a native, not from the ignorance of a foreigner. We may apply to him what Denham° with great felicity says of Cowley.° He wears the garb, but not the clothes of the ancients.

Throughout the volume are discernible the traces of a powerful and independent mind, emancipated from the influence of authority, and devoted to the search of truth. Milton professes to form his system from the Bible alone; and his digest of Scriptural texts is certainly among the best that have appeared. But he is not always so happy in his inferences as in his citations.

Some of the heterodox doctrines which he avows seemed to have excited considerable amazement, particularly his Arianism,° and his theory on the subject of polygamy.° Yet we can scarcely conceive that any person could have read the Paradise Lost without suspecting him of the former; nor do we think that any reader, acquainted with the history of his life, ought to be much startled at the latter. The opinions which he has expressed respecting the nature of the Deity,° the eternity° of matter, and the observation of the Sabbath,° might, we think, have caused more just surprise.

But we will not go into the discussion of these points. The book, were it far more orthodox or far more heretical than it is, would not much edify or corrupt the present generation. The men of our time are not to be converted or perverted by quartos. A few more days, and this essay will follow the *Defensio Populi*,° to the dust and silence of the upper shelf. The name of its author, and the remarkable circumstances attending its publication, will secure to it a certain degree of attention. For a month or two it will occupy a few minutes of chat in every drawing-room, and a few columns in every magazine; and it will then, to borrow the elegant language of the play-

bills, be withdrawn, to make room for the forthcoming novelties.

We wish however to avail ourselves of the interest, transient as it may be, which this work has excited. The dexterous Capuchins° never choose to preach on the life and miracles of a saint, till they have awakened the devotional feelings of their auditors by exhibiting some relic of him, a thread of his garment, a lock of his hair, or a drop of his blood. On the same principle, we intend to take advantage of the late interesting discovery, and, while this memorial of a great and good man is still in the hands of all, to say something of his moral and intellectual qualities. Nor, we are convinced, will the severest of our readers blame us if, on an occasion like the present, we turn for a short time from the topics of the day, to commemorate, in all love and reverence, the genius and virtues of John Milton, the poet, the statesman, the philosopher, the glory of English literature, the champion and the martyr of English liberty.°

It is by his poetry that Milton is best known; and it is of his poetry that we wish first to speak. By the general suffrage of the civilized world, his place has been assigned among the greatest masters of the art. His detractors, however, though outvoted, have

not been silenced. There are many critics, and some of great name, who contrive in the same breath to extol the poems and to decry the poet. The works they acknowledge, considered in themselves, may be classed among the noblest productions of the human mind. But they will not allow the author to rank with those great men who, born in the infancy of civilization, supplied, by their own powers, the want of instruction, and, though destitute of models themselves, bequeathed to posterity models which defy imitation. Milton, it is said, inherited what his predecessors created; he lived in an enlightened age; he received a finished education; and we must therefore, if we would form a just estimate of his powers, make large deductions in consideration of these advantages.

We venture to say, on the contrary, paradoxical as the remark may appear, that no poet has ever had to struggle with more unfavorable circumstances than Milton. He doubted, as he has himself owned, whether he had not been born "an age too late." ° For this notion Johnson has thought fit to make him the butt of much clumsy ridicule.° The poet, we believe, understood the nature of his art better than the critic. He knew that his poetical genius derived no advantage from the civilization which surrounded him, or from

the learning which he had acquired; and he looked back with something like regret to the ruder age of simple words and vivid impressions.

°We think that, as civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines. Therefore, though we fervently admire those great works of imagination which have appeared in dark ages, we do not admire them the more because they have appeared in dark ages. On the contrary, we hold that the most wonderful and splendid proof of genius is a great poem produced in a civilized age. We cannot understand why those who believe in that most orthodox article of literary faith, that the earliest poets are generally the best, should wonder at the rule as if it were the exception. Surely the uniformity of the phenomenon indicates a corresponding uniformity in the cause.

The fact is, that common observers reason from the progress of the experimental science to that of the imitative arts. The improvement of the former is gradual and slow. Ages are spent in collecting materials, ages more in separating and combining them. Even when a system has been formed, there is still something to add, to alter, or to reject. Every generation enjoys the use of a vast hoard bequeathed to it by antiquity, and transmits that hoard, augmented

by fresh acquisitions, to future ages. In these pursuits, therefore, the first speculators lie under great disadvantages, and, even when they fail, are entitled to praise. Their pupils, with far inferior intellectual powers, speedily surpass them in actual attainments. Every girl who has read Mrs. Marcet's° little dialogues on Political Economy could teach Montague° or Walpole° many lessons in finance. Any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton° knew after half a century of study and meditation.

But it is not thus with music, with painting, or with sculpture. Still less is it thus with poetry. The progress of refinement rarely supplies these arts with better objects of imitation. It may indeed improve the instruments which are necessary to the mechanical operations of the musician, the sculptor, and the painter. But language, the machine of the poet, is best fitted for his purpose in its rudest state. Nations, like individuals, first perceive, and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical, that of a half-civilized people is poetical.

This change in the language of men is partly the cause and partly the effect of a corresponding change in the nature of their intellectual operations, of a change by which science gains and poetry loses. Generalization is necessary to the advancement of knowledge; but particularity is indispensable to the creations of the imagination. In proportion as men know more and think more, they look less at individuals and more at classes. They therefore make better theories and worse poems. They give us vague phrases instead of images, and personified qualities instead of men. They may be better able to analyze human nature than their predecessors. But analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect. He may believe in a moral sense, like Shaftesbury;° he may refer all human actions to self-interest, like Helvetius;° or he may never think about the matter at all. His creed on such subjects will no more influence his poetry, properly so called, than the notions which a painter may have conceived respecting the lachrymal glands, or the circulation of the blood, will affect the tears of his Niobe,° or the blushes of his Aurora.° If Shakespeare had written a book on the motives of human actions, it is by no means certain that it would have been a good one. It

is extremely improbable that it would have contained half so much able reasoning on the subject as is to be found in the Fable of the Bees. But could Mandeville° have created an Iago?° Well as he knew how to resolve characters into their elements, would he have been able to combine those elements in such a manner as to make up a man, a real, living, individual man?

Perhaps no person can be a poet, or can even enjoy poetry, without a certain unsoundness of mind, if any thing which gives so much pleasure ought to be called unsoundness. By poetry we mean not all writing in verse, nor even all good writing in verse. Our definition excludes many metrical compositions which, on other grounds, deserve the highest praise. By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors. Thus the greatest of poets has described it, in lines universally admired for the vigor and felicity of their diction, and still more valuable on account of the just notion which they convey of the art in which he excelled:

"As imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."°

These are the fruits of the "fine frenzy" which he ascribes to the poet, — a fine frenzy doubtless, but still a frenzy. Truth, indeed, is essential to poetry; but it is the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false. After the first suppositions have been made, everything ought to be consistent; but those first suppositions require a degree of credulity which almost amounts to a partial and temporary derangement of the intellect. Hence of all people children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by Hamlet or Lear, as a little girl is affected by the story of poor Red Riding-hood. She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England. Yet in spite of her knowledge she believes; she weeps; she trembles; she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncultivated minds.

In a rude state of society men are children with a

greater variety of ideas. It is therefore in such a state of society that we may expect to find the poetical temperament in its highest perfection. In an enlightened age there will be much intelligence, much science, much philosophy, abundance of just classification and subtle analysis, abundance of wit and eloquence, abundance of verses, and even of good ones; but little poetry. Men will judge and compare; but they will not create. They will talk about the old poets, and comment on them, and to a certain degree enjoy them. But they will scarcely be able to conceive the effect which poetry produced on their ruder ancestors, the agony, the ecstasy, the plenitude of belief. The Greek Rhapsodists,° according to Plato, could scarce recite Homer without falling into convulsions. The Mohawk hardly feels the scalping-knife while he shouts his death-song. The power which the ancient bards of Wales and Germany exercised over their auditors seems to modern readers almost miraculous. Such feelings are very rare in a civilized community, and most rare among those who participate most in its improvements. They linger longest among the peasantry.

Poetry produces an illusion on the eye of the mind, as a magic lantern produces an illusion on the eye of

the body. And, as the magic lantern acts best in a dark room, poetry effects its purpose most completely in a dark age. As the light of knowledge breaks in upon its exhibitions, as the outlines of certainty become more and more definite, and the shades of probability more and more distinct, the hues and lineaments of the phantoms which the poet calls up grow fainter and fainter. We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.°

He who, in an enlightened and literary society, aspires to be a great poet, must first become a little child. He must take to pieces the whole web of his mind. He must unlearn much of that knowledge which has perhaps constituted hitherto his chief title to superiority. His very talents will be a hindrance to him. His difficulties will be proportioned to his proficiency in the pursuits which are fashionable among his contemporaries; and that proficiency will in general be proportioned to the vigor and activity of his mind. And it is well if, after all his sacrifices and exertions, his works do not resemble a lisping man or a modern ruin. We have seen in our own time great talents, intense labor, and long meditation em-

ployed in this struggle against the spirit of the age, and employed, we will not say, absolutely in vain, but with dubious success and feeble applause.

If these reasonings be just, no poet has ever triumphed over greater difficulties than Milton. He received a learned education; he was a profound and elegant classical scholar; he had studied all the mysteries of Rabbinical° literature; he was intimately acquainted with every language of modern Europe, from which either pleasure or information was then to be derived. He was perhaps the only great poet of later times who has been distinguished by the excellence of his Latin verse. The genius of Petrarch° was scarcely of the first order; and his poems in the ancient language, though much praised by those who have never read them, are wretched compositions. Cowley,° with all his admirable wit and ingenuity, had little imagination; nor, indeed, do we think his classical diction comparable to that of Milton. The authority of Johnson° is against us on this point. But Johnson had studied the bad writers of the Middle Ages till he had become utterly insensible to the Augustan elegance, and was as ill qualified to judge between two Latin styles as an habitual drunkard to set up for a wine-taster.

Versification in a dead language is an exotic, a far-fetched, costly, sickly imitation of that which elsewhere may be found in healthful and spontaneous perfection. The soils on which this rarity flourishes are in general as ill-suited to the production of vigorous native poetry as the flower-pots of a hothouse to the growth of oaks. That the author of the Paradise Lost should have written the Epistle to Manso° was truly wonderful. Never before were such marked originality and such exquisite mimicry found together. Indeed in all the Latin poems of Milton the artificial manner indispensable to such works is admirably preserved, while, at the same time, his genius gives to them a peculiar charm, an air of nobleness and freedom, which distinguishes them from all other writings of the same class. They remind us of the amusements of those angelic warriors who composed the cohort of Gabriel:

> "About him exercised heroic games
> The unarmed youth of heaven. But o'er their heads
> Celestial armory, shield, helm, and spear,
> Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold."°

We cannot look upon the sportive exercises for which the genius of Milton ungirds itself, without catching

a glimpse of the gorgeous and terrible panoply which it is accustomed to wear. The strength of his imagination triumphed over every obstacle. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind, that it not only was not suffocated beneath the weight of fuel, but penetrated the whole superincumbent mass with its own heat and radiance.

It is not our intention to attempt anything like a complete examination of the poetry of Milton. The public has long been agreed as to the merit of the most remarkable passages, the incomparable harmony of the numbers, and the excellence of that style, which no rival has been able to equal, and no parodist to degrade, which displays in their highest perfection the idiomatic powers of the English tongue, and to which every ancient and every modern language has contributed something of grace, of energy, or of music. In the vast field of criticism on which we are entering innumerable reapers have already put their sickles. Yet the harvest is so abundant that the negligent search of a straggling gleaner may be rewarded with a sheaf.

The most striking characteristic of the poetry of Milton is the extreme remoteness of the associations by means of which it acts on the reader. Its effect is

produced, not so much by what it expresses, as by what it suggests; not so much by the ideas which it directly conveys, as by other ideas which are connected with them. He electrifies the mind through conductors. The most unimaginative man must understand the Iliad. Homer gives him no choice, and requires from him no exertion, but takes the whole upon himself, and sets the images in so clear a light that it is impossible to be blind to them. The works of Milton cannot be comprehended or enjoyed, unless the mind of the reader coöperate with that of the writer. He does not paint a finished picture, or play for a mere passive listener. He sketches, and leaves others to fill up the outline. He strikes the key-note, and expects his hearer to make out the melody.

We often hear of the magical influence of poetry. The expression in general means nothing; but, applied to the writings of Milton, it is most appropriate. His poetry acts like an incantation. Its merit lies less in its obvious meaning than in its occult power. There would seem, at first sight, to be no more in his words than in other words. But they are words of enchantment. No sooner are they pronounced, than the past is present and the distant near. New forms of beauty start at once into existence, and all the burial-places

of the memory give up their dead. Change the structure of the sentence, substitute one synonyme for another, and the whole effect is destroyed. The spell loses its power; and he who should then hope to conjure with it would find himself as much mistaken as Cassim° in the Arabian tale, when he stood crying, "Open Wheat," "Open Barley," to the door which obeyed no sound but "Open Sesame." The miserable failure of Dryden° in his attempt to translate into his own diction some part of the Paradise Lost, is a remarkable instance of this.

In support of these observations we may remark, that scarcely any passages in the poems of Milton are more generally known or more frequently repeated than those which are little more than muster-rolls of names.° They are not always more appropriate or more melodious than other names. But they are charmed names. Every one of them is the first link in a long chain of associated ideas. Like the dwelling-place of our infancy revisited in manhood, like the song of our country heard in a strange land, they produce upon us an effect wholly independent of their intrinsic value. One transports us back to a remote period of history. Another places us among the novel scenes and manners of a distant region. A

third evokes all the dear classical recollections of childhood, the schoolroom, the dog-eared Virgil, the holiday, and the prize. A fourth brings before us the splendid phantoms of chivalrous romance, the trophied lists, the embroidered housings, the quaint devices, the haunted forests, the enchanted gardens, the achievements of enamored knights, and the smiles of rescued princesses.

In none of the works of Milton is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in Allegro and the Penseroso. It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose-water, the close packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems, as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make out a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza.

The Comus and the Samson Agonistes are works which, though of very different merit, offer some marked points of resemblance. Both are lyric poems in the form of plays. There are perhaps no two kinds of composition so essentially dissimilar as the drama and the ode. The business of the dramatist is to keep

himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. As soon as he attracts notice to his personal feelings, the illusion is broken. The effect is as unpleasant as that which is produced on the stage by the voice of a prompter or the entrance of a scene-shifter. Hence it was, that the tragedies of Byron° were his least successful performances. They resemble those pasteboard pictures invented by the friend of children, Mr. Newbury, in which a single movable head goes round twenty different bodies, so that the same face looks out upon us successively, from the uniform of a hussar, the furs of a judge, and the rags of a beggar. In all the characters, patriots and tyrants, haters and lovers, the frown and sneer of Harold° were discernible in an instant. But this species of egotism, though fatal to the drama, is the inspiration of the ode. It is the part of the lyric poet to abandon himself, without reserve, to his own emotion.

Between these hostile elements many great men have endeavored to effect an amalgamation, but never with complete success. The Greek Drama, on the model of which the Samson was written, sprang from the Ode. The dialogue was ingrafted on the chorus, and naturally partook of its character. The genius

of the greatest of the Athenian dramatists coöperated with the circumstances under which tragedy made its first appearance. Æschylus ° was, head and heart, a lyric poet. In his time, the Greeks had far more intercourse with the East than in the days of Homer, and they had not yet acquired that immense superiority in war, in science, and in the arts, which, in the following generation, led them to treat the Asiatics with contempt. From the narrative of Herodotus ° it should seem that they still looked up, with the disciples, to Egypt and Assyria. At this period, accordingly, it was natural that the literature of Greece should be tinctured with the Oriental style. And that style, we think, is discernible in the works of Pindar ° and Æschylus. The latter often reminds us of the Hebrew writers. The book of Job, indeed, in conduct and diction, bears a considerable resemblance to some of his dramas. Considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise. If, for instance, we examine the address of Clytemnestra to Agamemnon on his return, or the description of the seven Argive chiefs, by the principles of dramatic writing, we shall instantly condemn them as monstrous. But if we forget the characters, and think only of the poetry, we

shall admit that it has never been surpassed in energy and magnificence. Sophocles ° made the Greek drama as dramatic as was consistent with its original form. His portraits of men have a sort of similarity; but it is the similarity not of a painting, but of a bas-relief. It suggests a resemblance; but it does not produce an illusion. Euripides ° attempted to carry the reform further. But it was a task far beyond his powers, perhaps beyond any powers. Instead of correcting what was bad, he destroyed what was excellent. He substituted crutches for stilts, bad sermons for good odes.

Milton, it is well known, admired Euripides highly, much more highly than, in our opinion, Euripides deserved. Indeed, the caresses which this partiality leads our countryman to bestow on "sad Electra's poet," sometimes remind us of the beautiful Queen of Fairyland kissing the long ears of Bottom.° At all events, there can be no doubt that this veneration for the Athenian, whether just or not, was injurious to the Samson Agonistes. Had Milton taken Æschylus for his model, he would have given himself up to the lyric inspiration, and poured out profusely all the treasures of his mind, without bestowing a thought on those dramatic proprieties which the nature of the

work rendered it impossible to preserve. In the attempt to reconcile things in their own nature inconsistent, he has failed, as every one else must have failed. We cannot identify ourselves with the characters, as in a good play. We cannot identify ourselves with the poet, as in a good ode. The conflicting ingredients, like an acid and an alkali mixed, neutralize each other. We are by no means insensible to the merits of this celebrated piece, to the severe dignity of the style, the graceful and pathetic solemnity of the opening speech, or the wild and barbaric melody which gives so striking an effect to the choral passages. But we think it, we confess, the least successful effort of the genius of Milton.

The Comus is framed on the model of the Italian Masque,° as the Samson is framed on the model of the Greek Tragedy. It is certainly the noblest performance of the kind which exists in any language. It is as far superior to the Faithful Shepherdess,° as the Faithful Shepherdess is to the Aminta,° or the Aminta to the Pastor Fido.° It was well for Milton that he had here no Euripides to mislead him. He understood and loved the literature of modern Italy. But he did not feel for it the same veneration which he entertained for the remains of Athenian and Roman

poetry, consecrated by so many lofty and endearing recollections. The faults, moreover, of his Italian predecessors were of a kind to which his mind had a deadly antipathy. He could stoop to a plain style, sometimes even to a bald style; but false brilliancy was his utter aversion. His muse had no objection to a russet attire; but she turned with disgust from the finery of Guarini, as tawdry and as paltry as the rags of a chimney-sweeper on May-day. Whatever ornaments she wears are of massive gold, not only dazzling to the sight, but capable of standing the severest test of the crucible.

Milton attended in the Comus to the distinction which he afterwards neglected in the Samson. He made his Masque what it ought to be, essentially lyrical, and dramatic only in semblance. He has not attempted a fruitless struggle against a defect inherent in the nature of that species of composition; and he has therefore succeeded, wherever success was not impossible. The speeches must be read as majestic soliloquies; and he who so reads them will be enraptured with their eloquence, their sublimity, and their music. The interruptions of the dialogue, however, impose a constraint upon the writer, and break the illusion of the reader. The finest passages are those

which are lyric in form as well as in spirit. "I should much commend," says the excellent Sir Henry Wotton° in a letter to Milton, "the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto, I must plainly confess to you, I have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The criticism was just. It is when Milton escapes from the shackles of the dialogue, when he is discharged from the labor of uniting two incongruous styles, when he is at liberty to indulge his choral raptures without reserve, that he rises even above himself. Then, like his own good Genius bursting from the earthly form and weeds of Thyrsis,° he stands forth in celestial freedom and beauty.; he seems to cry exultingly,

> "Now my task is smoothly done,
> I can fly or I can run,"

to skim the earth, to soar above the clouds, to bathe in the Elysian dew of the rainbow, and to inhale the balmy smells of nard and cassia, which the musky winds of the zephyr scatter through the cedared alleys of the Hesperides.°

There are several of the minor poems of Milton on which we would willingly make a few remarks. Still

more willingly would we enter into a detailed examination of that admirable poem, the Paradise Regained, which, strangely enough, is scarcely ever mentioned except as an instance of the blindness of the parental affection which men of letters bear towards the offspring of their intellects. That Milton was mistaken in preferring this work, excellent as it is, to the Paradise Lost, we readily admit. But we are sure that the superiority of the Paradise Lost to the Paradise Regained is not more decided, than the superiority of the Paradise Regained to every poem which has since made its appearance. Our limits, however, prevent us from discussing the point at length. We hasten on to that extraordinary production which the general suffrage of critics has placed in the highest class of human compositions.

The only poem of modern times which can be compared with the Paradise Lost is the Divine Comedy.° The subject of Milton, in some points, resembled that of Dante; but he has treated it in a widely different manner. We cannot, we think, better illustrate our opinion respecting our own great poet than by contrasting him with the father of Tuscan literature.

The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante, as the hieroglyphics of Egypt differed from the picture-

writing of Mexico. The images which Dante employs speak for themselves; they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated. Their value depends less on what they directly represent than on what they remotely suggest. However strange, however grotesque, may be the appearance which Dante undertakes to describe, he never shrinks from describing it. He gives us the shape, the color, the sound, the smell, the taste; he counts the numbers; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain, business-like manner; not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn, not for the sake of any ornament which they may impart to the poem; but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself. The ruins of the precipice which led from the sixth to the seventh circle of hell were like those of the rock which fell into the Adige° on the south of Trent.° The cataract of Phlegethon° was like that of Aqua Cheta° at the monastery of St. Benedict.° The place where the heretics were confined in burning tombs resembled the vast cemetery of Arles.°

Now let us compare with the exact details of Dante the dim intimations of Milton. We will cite a few examples. The English poet has never thought of taking the measure of Satan. He gives us merely a vague idea of vast bulk. In one passage the fiend lies stretched out huge in length,° floating many a rood, equal in size to the earth-born enemies of Jove, or to the sea-monster which the mariner mistakes for an island. When he addresses himself to battle against the guardian angels,° he stands like Teneriffe or Atlas; his stature reaches the sky. Contrast with these descriptions the lines in which Dante has described the gigantic spectre of Nimrod.° "His face seemed to me as long and as broad as the ball of St. Peter's at Rome; and his other limbs were in proportion; so that the bank, which concealed him from the waist downwards, nevertheless showed so much of him that three tall Germans would in vain have attempted to reach to his hair." We are sensible that we do no justice to the admirable style of the Florentine poet. But Mr. Cary's translation is not at hand; and our version, however rude, is sufficient to illustrate our meaning.

Once more, compare the lazar-house ° in the eleventh book of the Paradise Lost with the last ward of Male-

bolge° in Dante. Milton avoids the loathsome details, and takes refuge in indistinct but solemn and tremendous imagery, Despair hurrying from couch to couch to mock the wretches with his attendance, Death shaking his dart over them, but, in spite of supplications, delaying to strike. What says Dante? "There was such a moan there as there would be if all the sick who, between July and September, are in the hospitals of Valdichiana,° and of the Tuscan swamps, and of Sardinia, were in one pit together; and such a stench was issuing forth as is wont to issue from decayed limbs."

We will not take upon ourselves the invidious office of settling precedency between two such writers. Each in his own department is incomparable; and each, we may remark, has wisely, or fortunately, taken a subject adapted to exhibit his peculiar talent to the greatest advantage. The Divine Comedy is a personal narrative. Dante is the eye-witness and ear-witness of that which he relates. He is the very man who has heard the tormented spirits° crying out for the second death, who has read the dusky characters on the portal within which there is no hope,° who has hidden his face from the terrors of the Gorgon,° who has fled from the hooks and the seething pitch of Bar-

bariccia° and Draghignazzo.° His own hands have grasped the shaggy sides of Lucifer.° His own feet have climbed the mountain of expiation.° His own brow has been marked by the purifying angel.° The reader would throw aside such a tale in incredulous disgust, unless it were told with the strongest air of veracity, with a sobriety even in its horrors, with the greatest precision and multiplicity in its details. The narrative of Milton in this respect differs from that of Dante, as the adventures of Amadis° differ from those of Gulliver.° The author of Amadis would have made his book ridiculous if he had introduced those minute particulars which give such a charm to the work of Swift, the nautical observations, the affected delicacy about names, the official documents transcribed at full length, and all the unmeaning gossip and scandal of the court, springing out of nothing, and tending to nothing. We are not shocked at being told that a man who lived, nobody knows when, saw many very strange sights, and we can easily abandon ourselves to the illusion of the romance. But when Lemuel Gulliver, surgeon, resident at Rotherhithe, tells us of pygmies and giants, dying islands, and philosophizing horses, nothing but such circumstantial touches could pro-

duce for a single moment a deception on the imagination.

Of all the poets who have introduced into their works the agency of supernatural beings, Milton has succeeded best. Here Dante decidedly yields to him; and as this is a point on which many rash and ill-considered judgments have been pronounced, we feel inclined to dwell on it a little longer. The most fatal error which a poet can possibly commit in the management of his machinery, is that of attempting to philosophize too much. Milton has been often censured for ascribing to spirits many functions of which spirits must be incapable. But these objections, though sanctioned by eminent names, originate, we venture to say, in profound ignorance of the art of poetry.

What is spirit? What are our own minds, the portion of spirit with which we are best acquainted? We observe certain phenomena. We cannot explain them into material causes. We therefore infer that there exists something which is not material. But of this something we have no idea. We can define it only by negatives. We can reason about it only by symbols. We use the word, but we have no image of the thing; and the business of poetry is with images, and not with words. The poet uses words

indeed; but they are merely one instruments of his art, not its objects. They are the materials which he is to dispose in such a manner as to present a picture to the mental eye. And if they are not so disposed, they are no more entitled to be called poetry than a bale of canvas and a box of colors to be called a painting.

Logicians may reason about abstractions. But the great mass of men must have images. The strong tendency of the multitude in all ages and nations to idolatry can be explained on no other principle. The first inhabitants of Greece, there is reason to believe, worshipped one invisible Deity.° But the necessity of having something more definite to adore produced, in a few centuries, the innumerable crowd of Gods and Goddesses. In like manner the ancient Persians thought it impious to exhibit the Creator under a human form. Yet even these transferred to the Sun the worship which, in speculation, they considered due only to the Supreme Mind. The history of the Jews is the record of a continued struggle between pure Theism, supported by the most terrible sanctions, and the strangely fascinating desire of having some visible and tangible object of adoration. Perhaps none of the secondary causes which Gibbon° has as-

signed for the rapidity with which Christianity spread over the world, while Judaism scarcely ever acquired a proselyte, operated more powerfully than this feeling. God, the uncreated, the incomprehensible, the invisible, attracted few worshippers. A philosopher might admire so noble a conception; but the crowd turned away in disgust from words which presented no image to their minds. It was before Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the Synagogue,° and the doubts of the Academy,° and the pride of the Portico,° and the fasces of the Lictor,° and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust. Soon after Christianity had achieved its triumph, the principle which had assisted it began to corrupt it. It became a new Paganism. Patron saints assumed the offices of household gods. St. George° took the place of Mars. St. Elmo° consoled the mariner for the loss of Castor and Pollux. The Virgin Mother and Cecilia° succeeded to Venus and the Muses. The fascination of sex and loveliness was again joined to that of celestial dignity; and the homage of chivalry was blended with that of religion.

Reformers have often made a stand against these feelings; but never with more than apparent and partial success. The men who demolished the images in Cathedrals° have not always been able to demolish those which were enshrined in their minds. It would not be difficult to show that in politics the same rule holds good. Doctrines, we are afraid, must generally be embodied before they can excite a strong public feeling. The multitude is more easily interested for the most unmeaning badge, or the most insignificant name, than for the most important principle.

From these considerations, we infer that no poet, who should affect that metaphysical accuracy for the want of which Milton has been blamed, would escape a disgraceful failure. Still, however, there was another extreme, which, though far less dangerous, was also to be avoided. The imaginations of men are in a great measure under the control of their opinions. The most exquisite art of poetical coloring can produce no illusion, when it is employed to represent that which is at once perceived to be incongruous and absurd. Milton wrote in an age of philosophers and theologians. It was necessary, therefore, for him to abstain from giving such a shock to their understandings as might break the charm which it was his object

to throw over their imaginations. This is the real explanation of the indistinctness and inconsistency with which he has often been reproached. Dr. Johnson acknowledges that it was absolutely necessary that the spirit should be clothed with material forms. "But," says he, "the poet should have secured the consistency of his system by keeping immateriality out of sight, and seducing the reader to drop it from his thoughts." This is easily said; but what if Milton could not seduce his readers to drop immateriality from their thoughts? What if the contrary opinion had taken so fully possession of the minds of men as to leave no room even for the half belief which poetry requires? Such we suspect to have been the case. It was impossible for the poet to adopt altogether the material or the immaterial system. He therefore took his stand on the debatable ground. He left the whole in ambiguity. He has, doubtless, by so doing, laid himself open to the charge of inconsistency. But, though philosophically in the wrong, we cannot but believe that he was poetically in the right. This task, which almost any other writer would have found impracticable, was easy to him. The peculiar art which he possessed of communicating his meaning circuitously through a long succession of associated ideas,

and of intimating more than he expressed, enabled him to disguise those incongruities which he could not avoid.

Poetry which relates to the beings of another world ought to be at once mysterious and picturesque. That of Milton is so. That of Dante is picturesque indeed beyond any that was ever written. Its effect approaches to that produced by the pencil or the chisel. But it is picturesque to the exclusion of all mystery. This is a fault on the right side, a fault inseparable from the plan of Dante's poem, which, as we have already observed, rendered the utmost accuracy of description necessary. Still it is a fault. The supernatural agents excite an interest; but it is not the interest which is proper to supernatural agents. We feel that we could talk to the ghosts and demons without any emotion of unearthly awe. We could, like Don Juan,° ask them to supper, and eat heartily in their company. Dante's angels are good men with wings. His devils are spiteful ugly executioners. His dead men are merely living men in strange situations. The scene which passes between the poet and Farinata° is justly celebrated. Still, Farinata in the burning tomb is exactly what Farinata would have been at an *auto da fe*.° Nothing can be more touching

than the first interview of Dante and Beatrice.° Yet what is it, but a lovely woman chiding, with sweet austere composure, the lover for whose affection she is grateful, but whose vices she reprobates? The feelings which give the passage its charm would suit the streets of Florence as well as the summit of the Mount of Purgatory.°

The spirits of Milton are unlike those of almost all other writers. His fiends, in particular, are wonderful creations. They are not metaphysical abstractions. They are not wicked men. They are not ugly beasts. They have no horns, no tails, none of the fee-faw-fum of Tasso° and Klopstock.° They have just enough in common with human nature to be intelligible to human beings. Their characters are, like their forms, marked by a certain dim resemblance to those of men, but exaggerated to gigantic dimensions, and veiled in mysterious gloom.

Perhaps the gods and demons of Æschylus may best bear a comparison with the angels and devils of Milton. The style of the Athenian had, as we have remarked, something of the Oriental character; and the same peculiarity may be traced in his mythology. It has nothing of the amenity and elegance which we generally find in the superstitions of Greece. All is

rugged, barbaric, and colossal. The legends of Æschylus seem to harmonize less with the fragrant groves and graceful porticos in which his countrymen paid their vows to the God of Light and Goddess of Desire, than with those huge and grotesque labyrinths of eternal granite in which Egypt enshrined her mystic Osiris, or in which Hindostan still bows down to her seven-headed idols. His favorite gods are those of the elder generation, the sons of heaven and earth, compared with whom Jupiter himself was a stripling and an upstart, the gigantic Titans, and the inexorable Furies. Foremost among his creations of this class stands Prometheus,° half fiend, half redeemer, the friend of man, the sullen and implacable enemy of heaven. Prometheus bears undoubtedly a considerable resemblance to the Satan of Milton. In both we find the same impatience of control, the same ferocity, the same unconquerable pride. In both characters also are mingled, though in very different proportions, some kind and generous feelings. Prometheus, however, is hardly superhuman enough. He talks too much of his chains and his uneasy posture: he is rather too much depressed and agitated. His resolution seems to depend on the knowledge which he possesses that he holds the fate

of his torturer in his hands, and that the hour of his release will surely come. But Satan is a creature of another sphere. The might of his intellectual nature is victorious over the extremity of pain. Amidst agonies which cannot be conceived without horror, he deliberates, resolves, and even exults. Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake, and the marl burning with solid fire, against the prospect of an eternity of unintermitted misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from anything external, nor even from hope itself.

To return for a moment to the parallel which we have been attempting to draw between Milton and Dante, we would add that the poetry of these great men has in a considerable degree taken its character from their moral qualities. They are not egotists. They rarely obtrude their idiosyncrasies on their readers. They have nothing in common with those modern beggars for fame, who extort a pittance from the compassion of the inexperienced by exposing the nakedness and sores of their minds. Yet it would be difficult to name two writers whose works have been more completely, though undesignedly, colored by their personal feelings.

The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of spirit; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the Divine Comedy we discern the asperity which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflicts of earth nor the hope of heaven, could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible even in its honey. His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, "a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness." ° The gloom of his characters discolors all the passions of men, and all the face of nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne. All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous

curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.

Milton was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover; and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love. He had survived his health and his sight, the comforts of his home, and the prosperity of his party. Of the great men by whom he had been distinguished at his entrance into life, some had been taken away from the evil to come; some had carried into foreign climates their unconquerable hatred of oppression; some were pining in dungeons; and some had poured forth their blood on scaffolds. Venal and licentious scribblers, with just sufficient talent to clothe the thoughts of a pandar in the style of a bellman, were now the favorite writers of the Sovereign and of the public. It was a loathsome herd, which could be compared to nothing so fitly as to the rabble of Comus, grotesque monsters, half bestial, half human, dropping with wine, bloated with gluttony, and reeling in obscene dances. Amidst these that fair Muse was placed, like the chaste lady of the Masque, lofty, spotless, and serene, to be chattered at, and pointed at, and grinned at, by the whole rout of Satyrs and Goblins. If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have

been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless, and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die.

Hence it was that, though he wrote the Paradise Lost at a time of life when images of beauty and tenderness are in general beginning to fade, even from those minds in which they have not been effaced by anxiety and disappointment, he adorned it with all that is most lovely and delightful in the physical and in the moral world. Neither Theocritus ° nor Ariosto ° had a finer or a more healthful sense of the pleasantness of external objects, or loved better to luxuriate

amidst sunbeams and flowers, the songs of nightingales, the juice of summer fruits, and the coolness of shady fountains. His conception of love unites all the voluptuousness of the Oriental harem, and all the gallantry of the chivalric tournament, with all the pure and quiet affection of an English fireside. His poetry reminds us of the miracles of Alpine scenery. Nooks and dells, beautiful as fairyland, are embosomed in its most rugged and gigantic elevations. The roses and myrtles bloom unchilled on the verge of the avalanche.

Traces, indeed, of the peculiar character of Milton may be found in all his works; but it is most strongly displayed in the Sonnets.° Those remarkable poems have been undervalued by critics who have not understood their nature. They have no epigrammatic point. There is none of the ingenuity of Filicaja° in the thought, none of the hard and brilliant enamel of Petrarch° in the style. They are simple but majestic records of the feelings of the poet; as little tricked out for the public eye as his diary would have been. A victory, an expected attack upon the city, a momentary fit of depression or exultation, a jest thrown out against one of his books, a dream which for a short time restored to him that beautiful face over

which the grave had closed forever, led him to musings, which, without effort, shaped themselves into verse. The unity of sentiment and severity of style which characterize these little pieces remind us of the Greek Anthology,° or perhaps still more of the Collects of the English Liturgy. The noble poem on the Massacres of Piedmont is strictly a Collect in verse.

The Sonnets are more or less striking according as the occasions which gave birth to them are more or less interesting. But they are, almost without exception, dignified by a sobriety and greatness of mind to which we know not where to look for a parallel. It would, indeed, be scarcely safe to draw any decided inferences as to the character of a writer from passages directly egotistical. But the qualities which we have ascribed to Milton, though perhaps most strongly marked in those parts of his works which treat of his personal feelings, are distinguishable in every page, and impart to all his writings, prose and poetry, English, Latin, and Italian, a strong family likeness.

His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high and of an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of

the great conflict between Oromasdes° and Arimanes,° liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear.

Of those principles, then struggling for their infant existence, Milton was the most devoted and eloquent literary champion. We need not say how much we admire his public conduct. But we cannot disguise from ourselves that a large portion of his countrymen still think it unjustifiable. The civil war, indeed, has been more discussed, and is less understood, than any event in English history. The friends of liberty labored under the disadvantage of which the lion in the fable complained so bitterly. Though they were the conquerors, their enemies were the painters. As a body, the Roundheads had done their utmost to

decry and ruin literature; and literature was even with them, as, in the long run, it always is with its enemies. The best book on their side of the question is the charming narrative of Mrs. Hutchinson.° May's History° of the Parliament is good; but it breaks off at the most interesting crisis of the struggle. The performance of Ludlow° is foolish and violent; and most of the later writers who have espoused the same cause, Oldmixon° for instance, and Catherine Macaulay,° have, to say the least, been more distinguished by zeal than either by candor or by skill. On the other side are the most authoritative and the most popular historical works in our language, that of Clarendon,° and that of Hume.° The former is not only ably written and full of valuable information, but has also an air of dignity and sincerity which makes even the prejudices and errors with which it abounds respectable. Hume, from whose fascinating narrative the great mass of the reading public are still contented to take their opinions, hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion, and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate while affecting the impartiality of a judge.

The public conduct of Milton must be approved or

condemned according as the resistance of the people to Charles the First shall appear to be justifiable or criminal. We shall therefore make no apology for dedicating a few pages to the discussion of that interesting and most important question. We shall not argue it on general grounds. We shall not recur to those primary principles from which the claim of any government to the obedience of its subjects is to be deduced. We are entitled to that vantage ground; but we will relinquish it. We are, on this point, so confident of superiority, that we are not unwilling to imitate the ostentatious generosity of those ancient knights, who vowed to joust without helmet or shield against all enemies, and to give their antagonists the advantage of sun and wind. We will take the naked constitutional question. We confidently affirm, that every reason which can be urged in favor of the Revolution of 1688 may be urged with at least equal force in favor of what is called the Great Rebellion.

In one respect, only, we think, can the warmest admirers of Charles venture to say that he was a better sovereign than his son. He was not, in name and profession, a Papist; we say in name and profession, because both Charles himself and his creature Laud,° while they abjured the innocent badges of popery,

retained all its worst vices, a complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance. This, however, we waive. We will concede that Charles was a good Protestant; but we say that his Protestantism does not make the slightest distinction between his case and that of James.

The principles of the Revolution have often been grossly misrepresented, and never more than in the course of the present year. There is a certain class of men who, while they profess to hold in reverence the great names and great actions of former times, never look at them for any other purpose than in order to find in them some excuse for existing abuses. In every venerable precedent they pass by what is essential, and take only what is accidental: they keep out of sight what is beneficial, and hold up to public imitation all that is defective. If, in any part of any great example, there be anything unsound, these flesh-flies detect it with an unerring instinct, and dart upon it with a ravenous delight. If some good end has been attained in spite of them, they feel, with their prototype, that

"Their labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil." °

To the blessings which England has derived from the Revolution these people are utterly insensible. The expulsion of a tyrant, the solemn recognition of popular rights, liberty, security, toleration, all go for nothing with them. One sect° there was, which, from unfortunate temporary causes, it was thought necessary to keep under close restraint. One part° of the empire there was so unhappily circumstanced, that at that time its misery was necessary to our happiness, and its slavery to our freedom. These are the parts of the Revolution which the politicians of whom we speak love to contemplate, and which seem to them not indeed to vindicate, but in some degree to palliate, the good which it has produced. Talk to them of Naples, of Spain, or of South America. They stand forth zealots for the doctrine of Divine Right which has now come back to us, like a thief from transportation, under the *alias* of Legitimacy. But mention the miseries of Ireland. Then William is a hero. Then Somers° and Shrewsbury° are great men. Then the Revolution is a glorious era. The very same persons who, in this country, never omit an opportunity of reviving every wretched Jacobite

slander respecting the Whigs of that period, have no sooner crossed St. George's Channel, than they begin to fill their bumpers to the glorious and immortal memory. They may truly boast that they look not at men, but at measures. So that evil be done, they care not who does it; the arbitrary Charles, or the liberal William, Ferdinand the Catholic,° or Frederic° the Protestant. On such occasions their deadliest opponents may reckon upon their candid construction. The bold assertions of these people have of late impressed a large portion of the public with an opinion that James the Second was expelled simply because he was a Catholic, and that the Revolution was essentially a Protestant Revolution.

But this certainly was not the case; nor can any person who has acquired more knowledge of the history of those times than is to be found in Goldsmith's Abridgment° believe that, if James had held his own religious opinions without wishing to make proselytes, or if, wishing even to make proselytes, he had contented himself with exerting only his constitutional influence for that purpose, the Prince of Orange would ever have been invited over. Our ancestors, we suppose, knew their own meaning; and, if we may believe them, their hostility was primarily not to

popery, but to tyranny. They did not drive out a tyrant because he was a Catholic; but they excluded Catholics from the crown, because they thought them likely to be tyrants. The ground on which they, in their famous resolution, declared the throne vacant, was this, "that James had broken the fundamental laws of the kingdom." Every man, therefore, who approves of the Revolution of 1688 must hold that the breach of fundamental laws on the part of the sovereign justifies resistance. The question, then, is this: Had Charles the First broken the fundamental laws of England?

No person can answer in the negative, unless he refuses credit, not merely to all the accusations brought against Charles by his opponents, but to the narratives of the warmest Royalists, and to the confessions of the King himself. If there be any truth in any historian of any party who has related the events of that reign, the conduct of Charles, from his accession to the meeting of the Long Parliament, had been a continued course of oppression and treachery. Let those who applaud the Revolution, and condemn the Rebellion, mention one act of James the Second to which a parallel is not to be found in the history of his father. Let them lay their fingers on a single

article in the Declaration of Right,° presented by the two Houses to William and Mary, which Charles is not acknowledged to have violated. He had, according to the testimony of his own friends, usurped the functions of the legislature, raised taxes without the consent of parliament, and quartered troops on the people in the most illegal and vexatious manner. Not a single session of parliament had passed without some unconstitutional attack on the freedom of debate; the right of petition was grossly violated; arbitrary judgments, exorbitant fines, and unwarranted imprisonments were grievances of daily occurrence. If these things do not justify resistance, the Revolution was treason; if they do, the Great Rebellion was laudable.

But, it is said, why not adopt milder measures? Why, after the King had consented to so many reforms, and renounced so many oppressive prerogatives, did the parliament continue to rise in their demands at the risk of provoking a civil war? The ship-money° had been given up. The Star Chamber° had been abolished. Provision had been made for the frequent convocation and secure deliberation of parliaments. Why not pursue an end confessedly good by peaceable and regular means? We recur

again to the analogy of the Revolution. Why was James driven from the throne? Why was he not retained upon conditions? He too had offered to call a free parliament and to submit to its decision all the matters in dispute. Yet we are in the habit of praising our forefathers, who preferred a revolution, a disputed succession, a dynasty of strangers, twenty years of foreign and intestine war, a standing army, and a national debt, to the rule, however restricted, of a tried and proved tyrant. The Long Parliament acted on the same principle and is entitled to the same praise. They could not trust the King. He had no doubt passed salutary laws; but what assurance was there that he would not break them? He had renounced oppressive prerogatives; but where was the security that he would not resume them? The nation had to deal with a man whom no tie could bind, a man who made and broke promises with equal facility, a man whose honor had been a hundred times pawned, and never redeemed.

Here, indeed, the Long Parliament stands on still stronger ground than the Convention of 1688. No action of James can be compared to the conduct of Charles with respect to the Petition of Right.° The Lords and Commons present him with a bill in which

the constitutional limits of his power are marked out. He hesitates; he evades; at last he bargains to give his assent for five subsidies. The bill receives his solemn assent; the subsidies are voted; but no sooner is the tyrant relieved, than he returns at once to all the arbitrary measures which he had bound himself to abandon, and violates all the clauses of the very Act which he had been paid to pass.

For more than ten years the people had seen the rights which were theirs by a double claim, by immemorial inheritance and by recent purchase, infringed by the perfidious king who had recognized them. At length circumstances compelled Charles to summon another Parliament: another chance was given to our fathers: were they to throw it away as they had thrown away the former? Were they again to be cozened by *le Roi le veut?* ° Were they again to advance their money on pledges which had been forfeited over and over again? Were they to lay a second Petition of Right at the foot of the throne, to grant another lavish aid in exchange for another unmeaning ceremony, and then to take their departure, till, after ten years more of fraud and oppression, their prince should again require a supply, again repay it with a perjury? They were compelled to

choose whether they would trust a tyrant or conquer him. We think that they chose wisely and nobly.

The advocates of Charles, like the advocates of other malefactors against whom overwhelming evidence is produced, generally decline all controversy about the facts, and content themselves with calling testimony to character. He had so many private virtues! And had James the Second no private virtues? Was Oliver Cromwell, his bitterest enemies themselves being judges, destitute of private virtues? And what, after all, are the virtues ascribed to Charles? A religious zeal, not more sincere than that of his son, and fully as weak and narrow-minded, and a few of the ordinary household decencies which half the tombstones in England claim for those who lie beneath them. A good father! A good husband! Ample apologies indeed for fifteen years of persecution, tyranny, and falsehood!

° We charge him with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him for having violated the articles of the Peti-

tion of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! It is to such considerations as these, together with his Vandyke° dress, his handsome face, and his peaked beard, that he owes, we verily believe, most of his popularity with the present generation.

For ourselves, we own that we do not understand the common phrase, a good man, but a bad king. We can as easily conceive a good man and an unnatural father, or a good man and a treacherous friend. We cannot, in estimating the character of an individual, leave out of our consideration his conduct in the most important of all human relations; and if in that relation we find him to have been selfish, cruel, and deceitful, we shall take the liberty to call him a bad man, in spite of all his temperance at table, and all his regularity at chapel.

We cannot refrain from adding a few words respecting a topic on which the defenders of Charles are fond of dwelling. If, they say, he governed his people ill, he at least governed them after the example of his predecessors. If he violated their privileges, it was because those privileges had not been accurately de-

fined. No act of oppression has ever been imputed to him which has not a parallel in the annals of the Tudors. This point Hume has labored, with an art which is as discreditable in a historical work as it would be admirable in a forensic address. The answer is short, clear, and decisive. Charles had assented to the Petition of Right. He had renounced the oppressive powers said to have been exercised by his predecessors, and he had renounced them for money. He was not entitled to set up his antiquated claims against his own recent release.

These arguments are so obvious, that it may seem superfluous to dwell upon them. But those who have observed how much the events of that time are misrepresented and misunderstood will not blame us for stating the case simply. It is a case of which the simplest statement is the strongest.

The enemies of the Parliament, indeed, rarely choose to take issue on the great points of the question. They content themselves with exposing some of the crimes and follies to which public commotions necessarily give birth. They bewail the unmerited fate of Strafford.° They execrate the lawless violence of the army. They laugh at the Scriptural names of the preachers. Major-generals fleecing their dis-

tricts; soldiers revelling on the spoils of a ruined peasantry; upstarts, enriched by the public plunder, taking possession of the hospitable firesides and hereditary trees of the old gentry; boys smashing the beautiful windows of cathedrals; Quakers° riding naked through the market-place; Fifth-monarchy° men shouting for King Jesus; agitators lecturing from the tops of tubs on the fate of Agag,° — all these, they tell us, were the offspring of the Great Rebellion. Be it so. We are not careful to answer in this matter. These charges, were they infinitely more important, would not alter our opinion of an event which alone has made us to differ from the slaves who crouch beneath despotic sceptres. Many evils, no doubt, were produced by the civil war. They were the price of our liberty. Has the acquisition been worth the sacrifice? It is the nature of the Devil or tyranny to tear and rend the body which he leaves. Are the miseries of continued possession less horrible than the struggles of the tremendous exorcism?

If it were possible that a people brought up under an intolerant and arbitrary system could subvert that system without acts of cruelty and folly, half the objections to despotic power would be removed. We should, in that case, be compelled to acknowledge

that it at least produces no pernicious effects on the intellectual and moral character of a nation. We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The heads of the church and state reaped only that which they had sown. The government had prohibited free discussion: it had done its best to keep the people unacquainted with their duties and their rights. The retribution was just and natural. If our rulers suffered from popular ignorance, it was because they had themselves taken away the key of knowledge. If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind submission.

It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are generally sober. In climates where wine is a rarity intemper-

ance abounds. A newly liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres.° It is said that, when soldiers in such a situation first find themselves able to indulge without restraint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and, after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in their own country. In the same manner, the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendor and comfort is to be found. If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or a good government in the world.

Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy,° who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to

appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were forever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful and celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war. Such a spirit is Liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory!

There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces; and that cure is freedom. When a prisoner first leaves his cell he cannot bear the light of day: he is unable to discriminate colors, or recognize faces. But the remedy is not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become

half blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to contend, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait forever.

Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of Public Liberty. We are not aware that the poet has been charged with personal participation in any of the blameable excesses of that time. The favorite topic of his enemies is the line of conduct which he pursued with regard to the execution of the King. Of that celebrated proceeding we by no means

approve. Still we must say, in justice to the many eminent persons who concurred in it, and in justice more particularly to the eminent person who defended it, that nothing can be more absurd than the imputations which, for the last hundred and sixty years, it has been the fashion to cast upon the Regicides.° We have, throughout, abstained from appealing to first principles. We will not appeal to them now. We recur again to the parallel case of the Revolution. What essential distinction can be drawn between the execution of the father and the deposition of the son? What constitutional maxim is there which applies to the former and not to the latter? The King can do no wrong. If so, James was as innocent as Charles could have been. The minister only ought to be responsible for the acts of the Sovereign. If so, why not impeach Jeffreys° and retain James? The person of a King is sacred. Was the person of James considered sacred at the Boyne?° To discharge cannon against an army in which a King is known to be posted is to approach pretty near to regicide. Charles, too, it should always be remembered, was put to death by men who had been exasperated by the hostilities of several years, and who had never been bound to him by any other tie than that which

was common to them with all their fellow-citizens. Those who drove James from his throne, who seduced his army, who alienated his friends, who first imprisoned him in his palace, and then turned him out of it, who broke in upon his very slumbers by imperious messages, who pursued him with fire and sword from one part of the empire to another, who hanged, drew, and quartered his adherents, and attainted his innocent heir, were his nephew and his two daughters. When we reflect on all these things, we are at a loss to conceive how the same persons who, on the fifth of November, thank God for wonderfully conducting his servant William, and for making all opposition fall before him until he became our King and Governor, can, on the thirtieth of January, contrive to be afraid that the blood of the Royal Martyr may be visited on themselves and their children.

We disapprove, we repeat, of the execution of Charles; not because the constitution exempts the King from responsibility, for we know that all such maxims, however excellent, have their exceptions; nor because we feel any peculiar interest in his character, for we think that his sentence describes him with perfect justice as "a tyrant, a traitor, a murderer, and a public enemy"; but because we are con-

vinced that the measure was most injurious to the cause of freedom. He whom it removed was a captive and a hostage: his heir, to whom the allegiance of every Royalist was instantly transferred, was at large. The Presbyterians could never have been perfectly reconciled to the father: they had no such rooted enmity to the son. The great body of the people, also, contemplated that proceeding with feelings which, however unreasonable, no government could safely venture to outrage.

But though we think the conduct of the Regicides blameable, that of Milton appears to us in a very different light. The deed was done. It could not be undone. The evil was incurred, and the object was to render it as small as possible. We censure the chiefs of the army for not yielding to the popular opinion; but we cannot censure Milton for wishing to change that opinion. The very feeling which would have restrained us from committing the act would have led us, after it had been committed, to defend it against the ravings of servility and superstition. For the sake of public liberty, we wish that the thing had not been done, while the people disapproved of it. But, for the sake of public liberty, we should also have wished the people to approve of it when it was

done. If anything more were wanting to the justification of Milton, the book of Salmasius ° would furnish it. That miserable performance is now with justice considered only as a beacon to word-catchers, who wish to become statesmen. The celebrity of the man who refuted it, the "Æneæ magni dextra," gives it all its fame with the present generation. In that age the state of things was different. It was not then fully understood how vast an interval separates the mere classical scholar from the political philosopher. Nor can it be doubted that a treatise which, bearing the name of so eminent a critic, attacked the fundamental principles of all free governments, must, if suffered to remain unanswered, have produced a most pernicious effect on the public mind.

We wish to add a few words relative to another subject, on which the enemies of Milton delight to dwell, his conduct during the administration of the Protector. That an enthusiastic votary of liberty should accept office under a military usurper seems, no doubt, at first sight, extraordinary. But all the circumstances in which the country was then placed were extraordinary. The ambition of Oliver was of no vulgar kind. He never seems to have coveted despotic power. He at first fought sincerely and

manfully for the Parliament, and never deserted it, till it had deserted its duty. If he dissolved it by force, it was not till he found that the few members who remained after so many deaths, secessions, and expulsions, were desirous to appropriate to themselves a power which they held only in trust, and to inflict upon England the curse of a Venetian oligarchy.° But even when thus placed by violence at the head of affairs, he did not assume unlimited power. He gave the country a constitution far more perfect than any which had at that time been known in the world. He reformed the representative system in a manner which has extorted praise even from Lord Clarendon. For himself he demanded indeed the first place in the commonwealth; but with powers scarcely so great as those of a Dutch stadtholder,° or an American president. He gave the Parliament a voice in the appointment of ministers, and left to it the whole legislative authority, not even reserving to himself a veto on its enactments; and he did not require that the chief magistracy should be hereditary in his family. Thus far, we think, if the circumstances of the time and the opportunities which he had of aggrandizing himself be fairly considered, he will not lose by comparison with Washington or Bolivar.° Had his moderation

been met with corresponding moderation, there is no reason to think that he would have overstepped the line which he had traced for himself. But when he found that his Parliaments questioned the authority under which they met, and that he was in danger of being deprived of the restricted power which was absolutely necessary to his personal safety, then, it must be acknowledged, he adopted a more arbitrary policy.

Yet, though we believe that the intentions of Cromwell were at first honest, though we believe that he was driven from the noble course which he had marked out for himself by the almost irresistible force of circumstances, though we admire, in common with all men of all parties, the ability and energy of his splendid administration, we are not pleading for arbitrary and lawless power, even in his hands. We know that a good constitution is infinitely better than the best despot. But we suspect, that at the time of which we speak the violence of religious and political enmities rendered a stable and happy settlement next to impossible. The choice lay, not between Cromwell and liberty, but between Cromwell and the Stuarts. That Milton chose well, no man can doubt who fairly compares the events of the protectorate with those of

the thirty years which succeeded it, the darkest and most disgraceful in the English annals. Cromwell was evidently laying, though in an irregular manner, the foundations of an admirable system. Never before had religious liberty and the freedom of discussion been enjoyed in a greater degree. Never had the national honor been better upheld abroad, or the seat of justice better filled at home. And it was rarely that any opposition which stopped short of open rebellion provoked the resentment of the liberal and magnanimous usurper. The institutions which he had established, as set down in the Instrument of Government,° and the Humble Petition° and Advice,° were excellent. His practice, it is true, too often departed from the theory of these institutions. But, had he lived a few years longer, it is probable that his institutions would have survived him, and that his arbitrary practice would have died with him. His power had not been consecrated by ancient prejudices. It was upheld only by his great personal qualities. Little, therefore, was to be dreaded from a second protector, unless he was also a second Oliver Cromwell. The events which followed his decease are the most complete vindication of those who exerted themselves to uphold his authority. His death dissolved the

whole frame of society. The army rose against the Parliament, the different corps of the army against each other. Sect raved against sect. Party plotted against party. The Presbyterians, in their eagerness to be revenged on the Independents,° sacrificed their own liberty, and deserted all their old principles. Without casting one glance on the past, or requiring one stipulation for the future, they threw down their freedom at the feet of the most frivolous and heartless of tyrants.

° Then came those days, never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The King cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sank into a viceroy of France,° and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults and her more degrading gold. The caresses of harlots and the jests of buffoons regulated the policy of the state. The government had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute. The principles of liberty were the scoff of every grinning courtier, and the anathema maranatha of every fawning dean. In every high place, worship was paid

to Charles and James, Belial and Moloch; and England propitiated those obscene and cruel idols with the blood of her best and bravest children. Crime succeeded to crime, and disgrace to disgrace, till the race accursed of God and man was a second time driven forth, to wander on the face of the earth, and to be a by-word and a shaking of the head to the nations.

Most of the remarks which we have hitherto made on the public character of Milton, apply to him only as one of a large body. We shall proceed to notice some of the peculiarities which distinguished him from his contemporaries. And, for that purpose, it is necessary to take a short survey of the parties into which the political world was at that time divided. We must premise, that our observations are intended to apply only to those who adhered, from a sincere preference, to one or to the other side. In days of public commotion, every faction, like an Oriental army, is attended by a crowd of camp-followers, an useless and heartless rabble, who prowl round its line of march in the hope of picking up something under its protection, but desert it in the day of battle, and often join to exterminate it after a defeat. England, at the time of which we are treating, abounded with

fickle and selfish politicians, who transferred their support to every government as it rose, who kissed the hand of the King in 1640, and spat in his face in 1649, who shouted with equal glee when Cromwell was inaugurated in Westminster Hall, and when he was dug up to be hanged at Tyburn, who dined on calves' head, or stuck up oak-branches, as circumstances altered, without the slightest shame or repugnance. These we leave out of the account. We take our estimate of parties from those who really deserved to be called partisans.

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were as a body unpopular; they could not defend themselves, and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore aban-

doned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

> "Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
> Che mortali perigli in se contiene:
> Hor qui tener a fren nostro desio,
> Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene."

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fa-

natics. Most of their absurdities were mere externa badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresse of friars.° We regret that these badges were no more attractive. We regret that a body to whos courage and talents mankind has owed inestimabl obligations had not the lofty elegance which distin guished some of the adherents of Charles the First or the easy good breeding for which the court o Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we mus make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio° in the play turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

°The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation o superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the

Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favor; and, confident of that favor, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand.

The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions,

and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision,° or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane,° he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood,° he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms.

They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus° with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part or lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their mind was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and their crusades, their Dunstans° and their De Montforts,° their Dominics° and their Escobars.° Yet, when all

circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and an useful body.

The Puritans espoused the cause of civil liberty mainly because it was the cause of religion. There was another party, by no means numerous, but distinguished by learning and ability, which acted with them on very different principles. We speak of those whom Cromwell was accustomed to call the Heathens, men who were, in the phraseology of that time, doubting Thomases or careless Gallios ° with regard to religious subjects, but passionate worshippers of freedom. Heated by the study of ancient literature, they set up their country as their idol, and proposed to themselves the heroes of Plutarch as their examples. They seem to have borne some resemblance to the Brissotines ° of the French Revolution. But it is not very easy to draw the line of distinction between them and their devout associates, whose tone and manner they sometimes found it convenient to affect, and sometimes, it is probable, imperceptibly adopted.

We now come to the Royalists. We shall attempt to speak of them, as we have spoken of their antagonists, with perfect candor. We shall not charge upon a whole party the profligacy and baseness of the horse-

boys, gamblers, and bravoes, whom the hope of license and plunder attracted from all the dens of Whitefriars° to the standard of Charles, and who disgraced their associates by excesses which, under the stricter discipline of the Parliamentary armies, were never tolerated. We will select a more favorable specimen. Thinking as we do that the cause of the King was the cause of bigotry and tyranny, we yet cannot refrain from looking with complacency on the character of the honest old Cavaliers. We feel a national pride in comparing them with the instruments which the despots of other countries are compelled to employ, with the mutes who throng their antechambers, and the Janissaries° who mount guard at their gates. Our Royalist countrymen were not heartless, dangling courtiers, bowing at every step, and simpering at every word. They were not mere machines for destruction, dressed up in uniforms, caned into skill, intoxicated into valor, defending without love, destroying without hatred. There was a freedom in their subserviency, a nobleness in their very degradation. The sentiment of individual independence was strong within them. They were indeed misled, but by no base or selfish motive. Compassion and romantic honor, the prejudices of childhood, and the

venerable names of history threw over them a spell potent as that of Duessa;° and, like the Red-Cross Knight,° they thought that they were doing battle for an injured beauty, while they defended a false and loathsome sorceress. In truth they scarcely entered at all into the merits of the political question. It was not for a treacherous king or an intolerant church that they fought, but for the old banner which had waved in so many battles over the heads of their fathers, and for the altars at which they had received the hands of their brides. Though nothing could be more erroneous than their political opinions, they possessed, in a far greater degree than their adversaries, those qualities which are the grace of private life. With many of the vices of the Round Table, they had also many of its virtues, courtesy, generosity, veracity, tenderness, and respect for women. They had far more both of profound and of polite learning than the Puritans. Their manners were more engaging, their tempers more amiable, their tastes more elegant, and their households more cheerful.

Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which we have described. He was not a Puritan. He was not a freethinker. He was not a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of every party

were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle and from the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. Like the Puritans, he lived

"As ever in his great task-master's eye."

Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty Judge and an eternal reward. And hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, their fortitude, their tranquillity, their inflexible resolution. But not the coolest sceptic or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their ludicrous jargon, their scorn of science, and their aversion to pleasure. Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which were almost entirely monopolized by the party of the tyrant. There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish for every elegant amusement, or a

more chivalrous delicacy of honor and love. Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and his associates were such as harmonize best with monarchy and aristocracy. He was under the influence of all the feelings by which the gallant Cavaliers were misled. But of those feelings he was the master and not the slave. Like the hero of Homer, he enjoyed all the pleasures of fascination; but he was not fascinated. He listened to the song of the Sirens; ° yet he glided by without being seduced to their fatal shore. He tasted the cup of Circe; ° but he bore about him a sure antidote against the effects of its bewitching sweetness. The allusions which captivated his imagination never impaired his reasoning powers. The statesman was proof against the splendor, the solemnity, and the romance which enchanted the poet. Any person who will contrast the sentiments expressed in his treatises on Prelacy with the exquisite lines ° on ecclesiastical architecture and music in the Penseroso, which was published about the same time, will understand our meaning. This is an inconsistency which, more than anything else, raises his character in our estimation, because it shows how many private tastes and feelings he sacrificed, in order to do what he considered his duty to mankind. It is the very struggle

of the noble Othello. His heart relents: but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honor. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her.

That from which the public character of Milton derives its great and peculiar splendor, still remains to be mentioned. If he exerted himself to overthrow a forsworn king and a persecuting hierarchy, he exerted himself in conjunction with others. But the glory of the battle which he fought for the species of freedom which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood, the freedom of the human mind, is all his own. Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against ship-money and the Star Chamber. But there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and should be emanicipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. He knew that those who, with the best intentions, overlooked these schemes of reform, and contented themselves

with pulling down the King and imprisoning the malignants, acted like the heedless brothers in his own poem, who, in their eagerness to disperse the train of the sorcerer, neglected the means of liberating the captive. They thought only of conquering when they should have thought of disenchanting.

> "Oh, ye mistook! Ye should have snatched his wand
> And bound him fast. Without the rod reversed,
> And backward mutters of dissevering power,
> We cannot free the lady that sits here
> Bound in strong fetters fixed and motionless."[c]

To reverse the rod, to spell the charm backward, to break the ties which bound a stupefied people to the seat of enchantment, was the noble aim of Milton. To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain,[c] and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf.[c] With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system,[c] in that sublime treatise which every states-

man should wear as a sign upon his hand and as frontlets ° between his eyes. His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses than against those deeply seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men and the irrational dread of innovation.

That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear when the outworks had been carried and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn hope. At the beginning of the changes, he wrote with incomparable energy and eloquence against the bishops. But, when his opinion seemed likely to prevail, he passed on to other subjects, and abandoned prelacy to the crowd of writers who now hastened to insult a falling party. There is no more hazardous enterprise than that of bearing the torch of truth into those dark and infected recesses in which no light has ever shone. But it was the choice and the pleasure of Milton to penetrate the noisome vapors, and to brave the terrible explosion. Those who most disapprove of his opinions must respect the hardihood with which he maintained them. He, in general, left to others the credit of expounding and defending the

popular parts of his religious and political creed. He took his own stand upon those which the great body of his countrymen reprobated as criminal, or derided as paradoxical. He stood up for divorce° and regicide. He attacked the prevailing systems of education. His radiant and beneficent career resembled that of the god of light and fertility.

> "Nitor in adversum; nec me, qui cætera, vincit
> Impetus, et rapido contrarius evehor orbi." °

It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Mil- 10
ton should, in our time, be so little read. As compositions, they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke° sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the Paradise Lost has the great poet ever risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his 20
feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, "a seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."

We had intended to look more closely at these performances, to analyze the peculiarities of the diction, to dwell at some length on the sublime wisdom of the Areopagitica° and the nervous rhetoric of the Iconoclast,° and to point out some of those magnificent passages which occur in the Treatise of Reformation,° and the Animadversions on the Remonstrant.° But the length to which our remarks have already extended renders this impossible.

We must conclude. And yet we can scarcely tear ourselves away from the subject. The days immediately following the publication of this relic of Milton appear to be peculiarly set apart, and consecrated to his memory. And we shall scarcely be censured if, on this his festival, we be found lingering near his shrine, how worthless soever may be the offering which we bring to it. While this book lies on our table, we seem to be contemporaries of the writer. We are transported a hundred and fifty years back. We can almost fancy that we are visiting him in his small lodging; that we see him sitting at the old organ beneath the faded green hangings; that we can catch the quick twinkle of his eyes, rolling in vain to find the day; that we are reading in the lines of his noble countenance the proud and mournful history of

his glory and his affliction. We image to ourselves the breathless silence in which we should listen to his slightest word, the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it, the earnestness with which we should endeavor to console him, if indeed such a spirit could need consolation, for the neglect of an age unworthy of his talents and his virtues, the eagerness with which we should contest with his daughters, or with his Quaker friend Elwood,° the privilege of reading Homer to him, or of taking down the immortal accents which flowed from his lips.

These are perhaps foolish feelings. Yet we cannot be ashamed of them; nor shall we be sorry if what we have written shall in any degree excite them in other minds. We are not much in the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. And we think that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen Boswellism. But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been de-

clared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flowers which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, and which were distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by superior bloom and sweetness, but by miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he labored for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.

NOTES

This essay was published in the *Edinburgh Review*, in August, 1825, and was the first of the brilliant series of essays and reviews which Macaulay contributed to that magazine. It contains much to which modern criticism objects. Indeed, Macaulay himself says of it in the preface to the first authorized edition of his essays: "No attempt has been made to remodel any of the pieces which are contained in these volumes. Even the criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, still remains overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament." Yet notwithstanding this the essay will abundantly repay the most careful study. It treats of one of the most interesting periods of English literature; and it is written with an earnestness and fresh enthusiasm which must both invigorate the student and inspire him to a closer study and a more judicious criticism of the works of the world's greatest epic poet than would otherwise be possible. Few of Macaulay's statements are to be accepted without scrutiny, yet there are few passages in the whole essay which are not suggestive and fruitful of thought, and in this, perhaps, lies its greatest value.

The allusions are annotated in the ensuing pages with sufficient fulness to enable the student who is not supplied with

reference books to understand the text. But those who have access to encyclopædias and dictionaries should not rely upon the notes alone. The essays of Macaulay form a rich mine of suggestions and allusions, and if it is carefully worked, and each allusion and suggestion followed to its source, the student will acquire a great treasure both of information and of discipline.

Page 1, line 1. **Mr. Lemon.** During the first part of the present century this gentleman arranged and classified a great mass of state papers relating to the Commonwealth, and among them a complete series of the orders of state which were issued during this period. In the course of his investigations he found an order, dated April 17, 1655, which relieved Milton from the routine detail of his duties as Latin Secretary. It is also known that Milton entered at this time upon the composition of three great works — *Paradise Lost*, a *Latin Thesaurus*, and a body of *Divinity*, compiled from the Holy Scriptures, all of which he completed. The first two were published, but the last was lost and was not recovered until 1823, when it was accidentally discovered in the manner related in the text. The full title of the work is "*Joannis Miltoni Angli de Doctrina Christiana, ex sacris dumtaxat Libris petita. Disquisitionum Libri Duo Posthumi.*" It is evident from the closing words of this title that Milton intended it for posthumous publication. Mr. Lemon after a long investigation has concluded that in some way Mr. Skinner became implicated in a plot against the government and that his papers were confiscated, and thus the treatise found a place among the government archives.

l. 6. **Secretary.** Milton was appointed Latin Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Cromwell in 1649, which position he held until the Restoration in 1660.

l. 7. **The Popish Trials.** In 1678 Titus Oates, a notorious renegade, accused a number of the Catholic nobility and gentry of conspiring against Protestantism in England. He gave a circumstantial account of various outrages which they contemplated, such as the burning of London, the butchery of leading Protestants, the landing of a French army to carry out their designs by force, etc. Public sentiment was aroused against the Catholics and several were tried, condemned, and executed. A revulsion of feeling soon followed, and the testimony of Oates was entirely discredited.

l. 8. **The Rye-house Plot** was a scheme devised by some English Whigs to murder Charles II., and call the Duke of Monmouth to the throne.

l. 9. **Mr. Skinner, Merchant.** Cyriac Skinner was Milton's favorite pupil and later his familiar friend. Milton dedicated two of his sonnets to him, the twenty-first and twenty-second. The latter is the beautiful and pathetic one composed on the loss of his sight.

l. 12. **Wood and Toland.** Anthony Wood, (1632–1695), was born in Oxford, England, and devoted his life chiefly to recording the history of the edifices and the scholars of his native city. He gave a sketch of Milton in his *Athenae Oxonienses.* John Toland, (1669–1722), was a noted Pantheist and enemy to revealed religion. He wrote a life of Milton in 1698, which was prefixed to an edition of his Prose Works.

Page 2, line 4. The terms **Whig** and **Tory,** as political appellations, were first used in 1680, being inspired by the exceedingly bitter factional strife which was raging at that time. For a definition of these terms see Hume's *History of England*, Ch. 68, also Macaulay's *History of England*, Ch. 2.

l. 5. **The Oxford Parliament.** The Parliament which was summoned to meet March 21, 1681, assembled in Oxford in order to escape from the influence of factious citizens in London.

l. 11. **Mr. Sumner.** Bishop Charles R. Sumner, (1790–1874), was librarian and chaplain to George IV.

Page 3, line 8. See Milton's eleventh sonnet.

l. 13. **Denham.** Sir John Denham, (1615–1668), was born in Dublin and took a prominent part in public affairs. He wrote several poems, among which was the "Elegy on Cowley," to which Macaulay here refers. The passage is as follows:

> "To him no author was unknown
> Yet what he wrote was all his own.
> He melted not the ancient gold,
> Nor, with Ben Jonson, did make bold
> To plunder all the Roman stores
> Of poets, and of orators.
> Horace's wit and Virgil's state
> He did not steal, but emulate;
> And when he would like them appear,
> Their garb, but not their clothes, did wear."

l. 14. **Cowley,** Abraham, (1618–1667). Cowley was a poet of great eminence. At the age of fifteen he published a volume of poems in which appeared the tragical "History of Pyramus and Thisbe," which he had written at the age of ten. The student should refer to an eloquent paper in Macaulay's *Miscellanies* entitled, "A Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War," which first appeared in Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*, August, 1824.

Page 4, line 3. **Arianism** was an ancient heresy first preached by Arius, in Alexandria, in the early part of the fourth century.

Its main features were in opposition to the orthodox conceptions of the Trinity. Milton, Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, and Isaac Watts were all said to be Arians.

l. 4. **his theory on the subject of polygamy.** It is a surprising fact that Milton commits himself on the side of polygamy by seeking to establish both its lawfulness and its honorable nature. See his Prose Works in Bohn's Standard Library, Vol. IV., 225–235.

l. 9. **the nature of Deity.** Macaulay's reference here is not clear. Milton's conception of the Divine Nature does not seem to have differed materially from that generally accepted by religious people to-day. See his Prose Works referred to above, Vol. IV., 1–181.

l. 10. **the eternity of matter.** Milton's discussion of the origin of matter is far from clear, and the translator admits that he is not sure he has caught the author's meaning, as the text is evidently corrupt.

l. 11. **observation of the Sabbath.** Milton's words are these: "Since, then, the Sabbath was originally an ordinance of the Mosaic law, imposed upon the Israelites alone, and that for the express purpose of distinguishing them from other nations, it follows that, if (as was shown in the former book) those who live under the gospel are emancipated from the ordinances of the law in general, least of all can they be considered as bound by that of the Sabbath, the distinction being abolished which was the special cause of its institution." *Ibid.*, Vol. V., 68.

l. 19. **Defensio Populi.** A treatise written in answer to Salmasius's *Defence of the King.* Claudius Salmasius, who was a professor in the University of Leyden, issued his celebrated

tractate in 1649, and Milton at once wrote and published his powerful answer, of which St. John says: "He [Milton] yielded to the influence of example and to the temptations of the subject; and in defending the people of this country for the most extraordinary action recorded in their annals, condescended to chastise a pedantic sophist in a manner altogether unsuited to his dignity. Yet it is a work of extraordinary merit, full of learning and eloquence and pervaded throughout by an ardent love of liberty." He strained his eyes so severely in the composition of this work that he became blind.

Page 5, line 5. **Capuchins** were a branch of the Order of Franciscan monks founded in 1525, in Urbino, Italy. The name is derived from the Latin *cappa*, a head covering, and was given to them on account of the peculiar hoods which were chosen as the badge of the order.

l. 20. It is hard to see in what sense Milton can be called the "Martyr of English Liberty" unless reference is made to his blindness, incurred by his ardor in defence of the people. The other epithets are fully merited.

Page 6, line 20. **"an age too late."** *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IX., l. 44.

l. 22. **butt of clumsy ridicule.** See Johnson's "Life of Milton," in *The Lives of the Poets*. While Johnson's estimate of Milton was not exalted, he nowhere makes him the butt of clumsy ridicule.

Page 7, line 4. Macaulay's theory of poetry as stated in this passage should not be accepted by the student without question. While some of his statements are in the main true, his position as a whole is untenable. It is evidently not true that as civilization advances poetry declines. The whole tendency of modern

literature disproves this. Yet it is undoubtedly true that the kind of poetry which flourishes in the earlier life of a people, as for example the epic and folk-lore poems, does decline, but it is only to give place to a loftier and more refined method of poetic expression. If the student will compare Chaucer, who stands upon the threshold of English literature, with Tennyson, in whom the poetic thought of the race reaches its greatest heights and finds its most perfect expression, the fallacy of Macaulay's argument will be at once apparent.

Page 8, line 6. **Mrs. Marcet** was a writer on popular science who did a great deal to familiarize the masses with its leading facts. Besides the book named, she wrote similar works on Chemistry, Botany, Natural Philosophy, and Land and Water. She lived in the first half of the present century.

l. 7. **Montague,** Charles, Earl of Halifax, (1661–1715). A noted statesman. See Macaulay's *History of England.*

l. 8. **Walpole,** Sir Robert, (1676-1745), was one of the most noted of English statesmen. He became Prime Minister under George I., and from 1721 to 1742 was the virtual ruler of England. His power was exerted in the interests of peace and sound finance, but not always in the interests of morality. He was noted for the boldness with which he resorted to bribery, and the saying, "Every man has his price," is said to have originated with him. For a striking delineation of this remarkable man see McCarthy's *Four Georges.*

l. 11. **Newton,** Sir Isaac, (1642–1727), was one of the most illustrious of English philosophers and scientists. The crowning glory of his life was the formulation of the theory of Universal Gravitation. Sir James McIntosh says: "Shakespeare, Milton, Locke, and Newton are four names beyond competition

superior to any that the Continent can put against them;" and Pope writes:

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
God said 'Let Newton be' and all was light."

Page 9, line 16. **Shaftesbury,** Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of, (1671–1713), was a member of Parliament, but his chief distinction was as a writer. His most celebrated work was his *Characteristics of Men, Matters, Opinions, and Times.*

l. 17. **Helvetius,** Claude Adrien, (1715–1771). A French encyclopædist. His fame chiefly rests upon his book entitled, *De l'Ésprit*, in which he sought to overthrow existing conceptions in reference to human life, and advocated the complete abandonment of man to the gratification of his appetites and passions. This book exerted a fearfully destructive influence upon the morals of the times. The student should study this passage carefully and determine for himself whether Macaulay's statements are true.

l. 22. **Niobe.** A character in Greek mythology, whose twelve children were slain because of her presumption in claiming superiority to a goddess. In pity for her grief the gods changed her to a stone and fixed her forever on the side of a mountain. Though turned to stone, Niobe still wept, and she is to-day used as the personification of inconsolable grief.

l. 23. **Aurora,** in Greek mythology, was the Goddess of the Dawn.

Page 10, line 4. **Mandeville,** Bernard de, (1670–1733), was a writer of some note, but his works were frequently licentious and vulgar. *The Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, etc., was a social satire which sought to prove that the vices of society are the foundation of civilization.

l. 4. **Iago**. A character in Shakespeare's *Othello, The Moor.*

Page 11, line 2. This quotation is from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V., Scene 1. Macaulay also refers to the preceding lines:

> "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And, as imagination," etc.

Page 12, line 14. **The Greek Rhapsodists** were wandering minstrels, whose occupation was the recital of the Homeric and other heroic poems. They were accustomed to declaim in a theatrical and sensational manner, seeking to move their audiences by means of gestures and varying inflections of the voice.

l. 14. **Plato,** (428–346 B.C.), was the greatest of Grecian philosophers, and was the friend and disciple of Socrates. Some of his best known works are *The Republic*, *The Apology* and *Crito*, and *The Phædo.*

Page 13, line 11. It will be profitable to compare Macaulay's theory of poetry with the definitive statements contained in the following passages:

"We listen to the poet — we allow him to sing to us while other men are only allowed to talk, not because he argues more logically than they but because he feels more deeply and perhaps more truly. . . .

"The 'message' of poetry must be more unequivocal, more thoroughly accentuated than that of any of the other fine arts. . . .

"It is an inspiration indeed. No man can write a line of genuine poetry without having been 'born again' (or, as the true reading of the text says, 'born from above')." — THEODORE WATTS in *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

"The poet is the man in whom these powers are in balance, the man without impediment, who sees and handles that which others dream of, traverses the whole scale of experience, and is representative of man in virtue of being the largest power to receive and impart." — EMERSON in *The Poet.*

"All good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

"A poet is a man endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind.

"The object of poetry is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion." — WORDSWORTH.

"Poetry secretes the ideal; therefore poetry is a hunger of the soul." — VICTOR HUGO.

"For poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. . . . Finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry 'the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all science,' and what is a countenance without its expression? Again Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.' . . .

"The best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us as nothing else can." — MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Essay on Poetry.*

> "To teach — to please — comprise the poet's views,
> Or else at once to profit and amuse."
>
> — HORACE, *Ars Poetica.*

"Poetry is more serious and more philosophical than History,

because it deals with universal truth, not that which lies in details." — LEIGH HUNT.

"What is called poetic insight is the gift of discerning in this sphere of strangely mingled elements the beauty and the majesty which are compelled to assume a garb so sordid." — HAWTHORNE.

"For poetry is the blossom and fragrance of all human knowledge, human thought, human passions, emotions, language." — COLERIDGE.

"The field of the historian is the past, that of the poet, the present. The history of an age cannot be written until a century has given it perspective. Poetry is the deep cry of the present. Art at its highest is prophetic — it is vision. Where the musician's work ends, the poet proceeds, and the poet at his best is a seer. Truth becomes intuitive, revelation direct." — DR. N. I. RUBINKAM.

Page 14, line 8. **Rabbinical literature.** A term sometimes used to include the whole body of Jewish literature, but it properly includes only those writings which were the result of the literary and religious activity of the rabbinical schools, such as the Talmud.

l. 13. **Petrarch,** Francesco (1304–1374). A noted Italian poet and scholar. He was especially renowned for the beauty and grace of his lyric verse. His best known works are those which celebrate his love for Laura, whose name is inseparably connected with his.

l. 20. **Johnson,** Samuel (1709–1784). A critic and moralist. He probably did more to influence the literary life of the eighteenth century and mould its character than any other man. His best known works are *Rasselas, or the Prince of Abyssinia*, *The Dictionary*, his contributions to the *Idler*, and *Rambler*,

and his *Lives of the Poets*. It is in this last named work that the sketch of Milton is found to which the author refers.

Page 15, line 8. **Epistle to Manso.** (Johannes Baptista Mansus.) The epistle referred to is in the form of a Latin poem addressed to the most distinguished of all the Italians, whom Milton met on his European trip. The subject of the poem was widely known as an author and a patron of letters, and was the bosom friend of the two greatest Italian poets of that period, Tasso and Marini. Milton pays a high compliment to Mansus and furtively announces his purpose of writing an epic on King Arthur.

"O were it my good luck to have such a friend in the future,
One that should know as well what is due the children of Phœbus,
If I should ever recall into song the kings of my country,
Arthur still from his underground stirring the warlike commotion,
Or should tell of those that were leagued with the knights of his Table."

It is needless to say that this purpose was sacrificed to a nobler one.

l. 22. *Paradise Lost*, IV., 551–554.

Page 18, line 6. **Cassim.** The brother of Ali Baba in the famous Arabian Nights tale of *Ali Baba, or the Forty Thieves.*

l. 9. **Dryden**, John, (1631–1700), was the greatest English poet during the interval between the ages of Milton and Wordsworth. He excelled in epic and lyric poetry, but wrote a great many dramas, which, although popular at the time of their production, are of a low order both from a literary and ethical standpoint. Reference is here made to his drama entitled the *State of Innocence*, which is based on Milton's version of the fall of man.

l. 16. **muster rolls of names.** For example see the catalogue of demons, *Paradise Lost*, I., 39.

Page 20, line 6. **Byron,** Lord George Gordon, (1788–1824), was one of the most noted of modern English poets. His best known works are: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, *The Giaour*, *Don Juan*, *The Corsair*, and *Childe Harold.*

l. 15. **Harold.** "The Pilgrimage of Childe Harold" is a poem in the Spenserian measure descriptive of the scenes through which Byron passed in his travels, and here is used for the author himself.

Page 21, line 3. **Æschylus,** (525–456 B.C.), was the first of the great Greek Dramatists. Only seven of his plays are extant although he wrote a great many more. These are *Prometheus Unbound*, *Eumenides*, *Agamemnon*, *The Persians*, *The Chœphori*, *The Suppliants*, and *The Seven against Thebes.* The references in the text are to the *Agamemnon* and *The Seven against Thebes.*

l. 9. **Herodotus.** The earliest and, next to Thucydides, the greatest of the Greek historians. His subject was the Persian Wars and the causes which led up to them. He includes in his narrative a description of the various Asiatic peoples and a remarkable book on Egypt and the Egyptians.

l. 15. **Pindar,** (522–450 B.C. about). A great lyric poet of Greece, known as the Theban Eagle.

Page 22, line 2. **Sophocles,** (495–405 B.C.), was the second great Greek dramatist, who is said to have brought drama from the skies to the earth. Æschylus found his subject matter in the gods and their struggles with one another, while Sophocles descended to earth and found his subject in man and his passions. The best known of his dramas is *Antigone.*

l. 7. **Euripides**, (485–406 B.C.), was the third of the great dramatic trio, and perhaps the greatest. Among his greatest works are *Medea*, the *Electra*, the *Alcestis*, and the *Bacchæ*.

l. 18. See *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III., Sc. 1. This comparison is far-fetched and absurd.

Page 23, line 16. **The Italian Masque**, according to Ward, "was, properly speaking, nothing more nor less than a dance with masks, and a dance always remained its central point." In the sixteenth century the *Masque* gained rapidly in ingenuity and complexity of plan, expense, and magnificence. It was first introduced into England in 1512, by Henry VIII., and was represented by Shakespeare in *Henry VIII.*, Act I., Sc. 4.

l. 19. **Faithful Shepherdess**, a pastoral drama by John Fletcher produced in 1610. A part of Milton's *Comus* is almost a verbal transcript of this pastoral.

l. 20. **Aminta**, a pastoral drama by Tasso produced in 1573.

l. 21. **Pastor Fido**, a pastoral by Guarini of Ferrara produced in 1585. This passage illustrates a habit of Macaulay in classifying or grading authors according to his estimate of their merits. Other illustrations of the same characteristic may be found in this essay.

Page 25, line 3. **Sir Henry Wotton**, (1568–1639), a poet and man of letters. He was provost of Eton College and a warm admirer of Milton.

l. 4. **dorique**. The reference is to the Doric style of architecture, which was the earliest developed, simplest, and most refined of the classical orders.

l. 13. **Thyrsis**, an attendant spirit who appears habited like Thyrsis, a shepherd, in *Comus*. See the Epilogue.

l. 22. **The Hesperides**, in Greek mythology the daughters of Atlas and Hesperis. They were set to watch the garden of the gods, which was located on an island on the other side of Oceanus, where day and night meet.

Page 26, line 18. **Divine Comedy**, one of the four great epics of the world written by Dante, the most distinguished of Italian poets. It is divided into three parts: the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. **Dante Alighieri** was born in 1265 and died in 1321. His name is inseparably connected with that of Beatrice, a beautiful maiden with whom he fell in love, but who died in early life. It was through her influence that he wrote many of the poems which caused him to be ranked among the best of poets.

The comparison which Macaulay institutes between Milton and Dante is interesting and suggestive but does scant justice to the latter. The student should refer to Macaulay's "Criticism on Dante," in his *Miscellanies*. Some critics claim that Milton refers to Dante in the passage (*P. Lost*, v. 166):

> "Fairest of stars, last in the train of night
> If better thou belong not to the dawn,
> Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
> With thy bright circlet."

Page 27, line 21. **The Adige**, a river of Tyrol in northern Italy, the Roman Athesis.

l. 22. **Trent**, the chief city of non-German Tyrol, on the Adige. It is surrounded by embattled walls, which, with its church towers, palaces, and ruined castles, give it, when seen from a distance, a very imposing appearance.

l. 22. **Phlegethon**, in Greek mythology a river of fire in the lower world which flows into the Acheron.

l. 23. **Aqua Cheta.** A river in eastern Italy. The passage referred to is as follows:

> "E'en as the river, that holds on its course
> Unmingled, from the mount of Vesulo,
> On the left side of Apennine, toward
> The east, which Acquacheta higher up
> They call, ere it descend into the vale,
> At Forliby that name no longer known,
> Rebellows o'er Saint Benedict, roll'd on
> From the Alpine summit down a precipice,
> Where space enough to lodge a thousand spreads."
>
> *Inferno*, XVI., 94–102.

l. 23. **St. Benedict**, (480–543), the founder of monasticism in the West. He originated the order of Benedictine monks and founded the famous monastery of Monte Cassino.

l. 25. **Arles**, a city in France on the left bank of the Rhone, near its mouth. It is especially noted for its antiquities. See *Inferno*, IX., III.

Page 28, line 6. See *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I., 192–208.

l. 10. See *Paradise Lost*, IV., 985–989.

l. 13. **Nimrod**, according to Gen. x. 8–12, a grandson of Ham and a mighty hunter. He is the reputed founder of the empire of Assyria. *Inferno*, XXXI., 52–60.

l. 24. **lazar-house**, a hospital or pest house. The word is derived from *Lazarus*, and means a leper in its original signification. See *Paradise Lost*, II., 477.

Page 29, line. 1. **Malebolge** was the eighth circle of hell, known as the "evil pits," and was located in a deep gulf surrounded by ten pits or trenches. The last of these "wards,"

"steams with the insufferable stench of the loathsome spirits of forgers and falsifiers, counterfeiters and liars, piled in foul and leprous heaps." *Inferno*, Canto XVIII.

l. 9. **Valdichiana**, formerly a swampy tract of land in the eastern part of Tuscany, but now reclaimed and converted into one of the most productive parts of Italy. *Inferno*, XXIX., 44–50.

l. 21. *Ibid.*, I., 114.

l. 23. "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." *Ibid.*, III., 9.

l. 24. **Gorgon** (Medusa). *Ibid.*, IX., 56.

Page 30, line 1. Among the dragons mentioned by Dante in the *Inferno* were Barbariccia or Crispbeard (Cantos XXI. and XXII.), and Draghignazzo or Dragonface (Cantos XII., 73, and XXI., 121).

l. 2. **Lucifer**, "Hell's Monarch." *Ibid.*, XXXIV., 67.

l. 3. **mountain of expiation.** Mount of Purgatory.

l. 4. **marked by the purifying angel.** *Purgatory*, IX., 100.

l. 10. **Amadis of Gaul.** The legendary hero of a famous mediæval romance of chivalry.

l. 11. **Gulliver.** Referring, of course, to *Gulliver's Travels* by Dean Swift.

Page 32, line 13. This statement will not bear investigation. The original Aryans probably worshipped one inclusive deity, the Sky God, but the earliest inhabitants of Greece were undoubtedly nature-worshippers. See the interesting chapter on the "Greek Religion" in Keary's *Dawn of Civilization.*

l. 25. See Chapter XVI. of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

Page 33, line 13. **Synagogue.** Used here to denote the Jews.

l. 13. **The Academy.** Originally a garden or grove in the suburbs of Athens, where Plato was accustomed to meet his disciples, and from which his system was called the Academic School. The name is derived from Academus, the name of the person who, according to tradition, gave the garden to the city.

l. 14. **the Portico.** Zeno, the founder of the School of Philosophy known as the Stoics, was wont to discourse in the porch or stoa.

l. 14. **the fasces of the Lictor** became the symbol of the imperial power of Rome.

l. 20. **St. George** is the national saint of England, in consequence of the miraculous assistance rendered by him to the armies of the Christians under Godfrey of Bouillon during the first crusade.

l. 20. **St. Elmo's.** The reference is to St. Elmo's fire.

l. 22. **Cecilia.** St. Cecilia was a Christian martyr who died at Rome in 230. Dryden alludes to her in his "Ode for St Cecilia's Day," and her story is told by Chaucer in the *Second Nun's Tale.*

Page 34, line 4. In the earlier Christian centuries an "image" was a representation on a plane surface or a mosaic. In the eighth century a movement was begun by Emperor Leo III., looking towards the abolition of image adoration. Those who took part in the movement were called "iconoclasts" or "image-breakers."

Page 36, line 18. **Don Juan.** A legendary nobleman of Spain, who was believed to have sold himself to the devil, in order to gratify his evil desires. The allusion here is to the tradition that Don Juan at one time made a feast and invited the statue erected to one of his victims to be present. During the progress of the feast he challenged the spirit, whose existence he denied, to manifest itself to him, whereupon the spirit proved its existence and power and condemned him to perdition. This story forms the theme of one of Mozart's operas, *Don Giovanni*, also of Byron's well-known poem.

l. 23. **Farinata** of the Uberti was one of the most conspicuous characters among the Florentine Ghibellines of the thirteenth century. In the *Inferno* he was condemned to hell because he held to the Epicurean philosophy. *Inferno*, Canto X.

l. 25. **auto da fe.** An act of faith. The name given, in Spain and Portugal, to the act of burning heretics.

Page 37, line 1. **Beatrice** was the maiden to whom Dante had plighted his faith. Her influence over him was very great, and inspired him to much of his best work, although she died at an early age.

l. 7. **Mount of Purgatory.** Beatrice, reciprocating the love of Dante, and urged by Mercy and Grace, descends from Paradise to the Lower World. There she engages the shade of Vergil to conduct Dante to the summit of the Mount of Purgatory, where she promises to await their arrival. This mountain is described by Dante as the loftiest elevation on the globe. At its summit is the Garden of Eden, the Earthly Paradise, from which Adam and Eve were expelled.

The interview with Beatrice begins in the *Purgatorio*, Canto XXX.

l. 13. **Tasso**, Torquato, (1544–1595). A celebrated Italian poet. His great work is the immortal epic, *Gerusalemme Liberata.*

l. 13. **Klopstock**, Friedrich Gottlieb, (1724–1803). A noted German poet. Among his works are *The Death of Adam*, *Solomon*, and *David.*

Page 38, line 13. **Prometheus.** A character in Greek mythology. For a deceit practised upon him by Prometheus Zeus denied the use of fire to mortals, but Prometheus stole a burning ember from heaven and brought it to earth in a hollow tube. For this he was chained upon the top of a mountain, where his liver was daily consumed by an eagle and daily renewed.

Page 40, line 18. Job x. 22.

Page 42, line 23. **Theocritus** was a Greek poet who flourished in the first half of the third century B.C., both at Alexandria and at Syracuse. Many of his poems were bucolic, and treated of the homely scenes of country life. He is called the last true Greek poet.

l. 23. **Ariosto**, Ludovico, (1474–1533), an Italian poet, whose greatest work is *Orlando Furioso.* "Ariosto," says Hallam, "has been after Homer the favorite poet of Europe. His grace and facility, his clear and rapid stream of language, his variety and beauty of invention, and his very transitions of subject left him no rival in general popularity."

Page 43, line 14. **Sonnets.** Milton wrote twenty-three sonnets, of which five are in Italian.

l. 17. **Filicaja**, Vincenzo, (1642–1707), a poet, scholar, and jurist of Italy. His sonnets are models of lofty thought and purity of style, and are excelled by few in any language. His

celebrated sonnet "L' Italia" was translated by Byron and introduced into the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, in the passage beginning "Italia, O Italia!"

l. 19. **Petrarch**, Francesco, (1304–1374), an Italian poet and scholar. He was specially noted for the beauty of the verse in which he celebrated his love for Laura, with whom his name has been associated much as that of Dante is associated with Beatrice.

Page 44, line 5. **the Greek Anthology** is a collection of the most beautiful passages, chiefly poetical, from classic Greek authors. The word means literally a flower-gathering.

Page 45, line 1. **Oromasdes and Arimanes**, or Ormuzd and Ahriman, were recognized as the personifications of good and evil in the old Persian religion. The former was believed to be the omniscient, omnipresent source of all good, and was opposed by Ahriman, over whom he would eventually triumph. Byron has introduced Arimanes, as the Prince of Evil, in his drama of *Manfred*.

Page 46, line 4. **Mrs. Hutchinson**, (1620–1659), was the wife of a soldier in the parliamentary army, whose life she wrote.

l. 5. **May's History.** Thomas May, (1594–1650), was a historian and poet. During the reign of Charles I. he was a favorite at court, but for some reason he abandoned the royal cause at the outbreak of the rebellion and offered his services to Parliament. He was appointed secretary and historiographer, and in this latter capacity wrote a *History of the Parliament which began Nov. 3, 1640.* This history covered only about three years of the struggle.

l. 7. **Ludlow**, Edmund, (1620–1693), was a member of the court which condemned Charles I., but was opposed to Crom-

well's assumption of the protectorate. At the Restoration he retired to Switzerland, where the remainder of his life was spent. The work referred to is his *Memoirs*.

l. 9. **Oldmixon**, John, (1673–1742), was the author of a *Critical History of England*, written from a Whig standpoint.

l. 10. **Catherine Macaulay**, (1733–1791), the author of a *History of England*, beginning with the reign of James I.

l. 14. **Clarendon**, Edward Hyde, Earl of, (1609–1674), a noted English statesman and historian, who followed the fortunes of Charles I. during the Civil War. He remained with Charles II. during the continuance of the Commonwealth, and returned with him in 1660. After that he became Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor, but having incurred the ill will of the House of Commons, he was impeached and compelled to take refuge in France, where he remained until his death. He wrote a *History of the Rebellion in England*, a *History of the Civil War in Ireland*, an autobiography, and other works.

l. 14. **Hume**, David, (1711–1776), was a noted essayist, philosopher, and historian. He was one of the greatest thinkers Scotland has ever produced. His most important work was the *History of England*, in which he worked his way back from the Stuarts to the Tudors, and ultimately back to the Roman occupation. His convictions and prejudices were so strong that he was very far from being an impartial historian. He could see no evil in the Stuarts, and but very little good in the Tudors, and was strongly opposed to all movements in favor of popular freedom. Yet his style is so clear and dignified and his narrative so entertaining that his history has always been popular and widely read.

Page 47, line 24. **Laud**, William, (1573–1645), was an energetic and learned man, who was highly esteemed by James I. and became a favorite of Charles I. By this ill-fated king he was given one office after another until finally he became Archbishop of Canterbury. He was bitterly opposed to the Puritans, and in his efforts to put down that movement resorted to the most extreme measures, thus incurring the implacable hatred of the popular party. He was impeached for high treason by the Long Parliament, and although acquitted by the House of Lords he was condemned by the Commons and executed.

Page 49, lines 1–2. See *Paradise Lost*, I., 164–165.

ll. 7–9. The references, of course, are to the Roman Catholics and to Ireland.

l. 22. **Somers and Shrewsbury** were trusted councillors of William.

Page 50, line 7. **Ferdinand V.**, known as the Catholic, was king of Castile and Aragon. It was his queen, Isabella, who was the patroness of Columbus.

l. 8. **Frederick, the Protestant.** Probably Frederick V., the Elector Palatinate, who was raised to this position in 1619, and was noted for his violent and injudicious advocacy of the cause of Protestantism. Macaulay's reference here is not clear. He may have reference to the reigning sovereigns of Spain and Prussia at the time when he wrote this essay, and who were respectively Catholic and Protestant, which reference is more in harmony with the spirit of the passage.

l. 18. **Goldsmith's Abridgment.** The work referred to is the *History of England* by Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), who

is better known as the author of the *Deserted Village* and *The Vicar of Wakefield.*

Page 52, line 1. The **Declaration of Right** was a state paper presented to William and Mary, which asserted certain rights which James II. had violated and claimed various privileges. This Declaration was afterwards passed by Parliament, and became known as the Bill of Rights. The great historical facts alluded to in this passage should be familiar to every student.

l. 21. **Ship-money**, a tax formerly laid in England upon seaport towns in time of war to furnish the means of repelling invasion. Charles, when refused supplies by Parliament, levied this tax upon inland as well as upon seaboard towns.

l. 22. **The Star Chamber** was an arbitrary court of justice which flourished in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Its name is derived from the room in which it held its sessions, which was decorated with gilt stars. It was abolished in 1641 by the Long Parliament.

Page 53, line 24. **The Petition of Right** was a celebrated English statute passed early in the reign of Charles I. Its purpose was to restrain and limit the prerogatives of the crown and to establish certain rights of the people. Charles gave his assent to all its provisions, but afterwards deliberately violated them.

Page 54, line 17. **le Roi le veut**. The formula by which the king signified his assent to a bill passed by Parliament.

Page 55, line 19. The following passage furnishes a good example of Macaulay's use of the antithetical sentence, to which mode of expression he resorted frequently and with great power and effect.

Page 56, line 5. **Vandyke dress.** Sir Anthony Vandyke was a famous Flemish painter who settled in England. He painted a famous portrait of Charles, also one of his children.

Page 57, line 23. **Strafford**, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of, (1593-1641), was one of the councillors of Charles I. He was executed in 1641, after the Commons had passed a bill of attainder against him.

Page 58, line 5. **Quakers.** The Society of Friends was instituted by George Fox, who was born in 1624. The new sect increased with great rapidity, and suffered from several severe persecutions. A few of its members committed some excesses, but the inference contained in this passage was hardly justifiable.

l. 6. **Fifth Monarchy Men.** A small religious sect which flourished in England during Cromwell's protectorate. They professed to believe that the time was near at hand when the four great monarchies of Daniel's prophetic vision should give way to a fifth, of which Jesus was to be king.

l. 8. **Agag**, king of the Amalekites, was slain by Samuel. See 1 Samuel xv. 33.

Page 60, line 3. The reference is to the famous wines which are produced so abundantly on the banks of the Rhine and at Xeres (Chāreth), which is a town, not a river, in the province of Cadiz in Spain. It gives its name to the sherry wine which is produced in the fertile plain in the midst of which the town is located.

l. 24. *Orlando Furioso*, XLIII., 72.

Page 63, line 6. **The Regicides.** The name given to the court which condemned and executed Charles I.

l. 17. **Jefferies**, George, (1648–1689), Chief Justice and Chancellor during the reign of James. He was unscrupulous and cruel, and participated in nearly all the excesses of James. He is remembered chiefly for the "bloody assizes," which he conducted after Monmouth's rebellion, to punish the adherents of this ill-fated prince, in which he caused three hundred and twenty people to be executed and more than eight hundred to be sold into slavery.

l. 19. **the Boyne.** The battle of the Boyne River, in which William III. defeated James II., July 1, 1690.

Page 67, line 7. **Venetian oligarchy.** The government of Venice was originally democratic, but the power was gradually concentrating in the hands of the aristocracy, and at the end of the thirteenth century Venice really ceased to be a democracy.

l. 16. **Dutch Stadtholder.** A governor of a country or province. The name was first given to William, Prince of Orange, who headed the great revolt against Spain.

l. 25. **Bolivar** (bō-leé-var), Simon, (1783–1830), was a South American patriot, who liberated Venezuela and New Granada from the Spanish rule. He also liberated Peru, the southern part of which was erected into an independent state in 1825, and named, after him, Bolivia.

Page 69, line 13. **Instrument of Government.** The formal deed by which Parliament surrendered its powers into the hands of Cromwell and defined his powers and duties, passed December 13, 1653.

l. 13. **Humble Petition and Advice.** A bill passed May 8, 1657, increasing Cromwell's powers and prerogatives, and taking the place of the *Instrument of Government.*

Page 70, line 5. **The Independents.** Partly a religious and partly a political party, originated during the great rebellion. They recognized no form of church government except that which each church instituted and exercised over its own members. They were radicals in politics.

l. 11. If Macaulay meant to apply this characterization to the whole nation, it is, of course, a gross exaggeration; but it is a powerful and truthful delineation of the degraded condition into which the limited circle of the royal court had sunk.

l. 17. In order to become independent of Parliament Charles entered into a secret treaty with Louis XIV., king of France, by which he bound himself to assist Louis in the war against Holland, and to do certain other things which were exceedingly distasteful to the English people, in return for which he was to receive a large stipend annually, and the assistance of a French army to put down any insurrection that might rise in England.

Page 73, line 17. This quotation is from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, XV., 57. It is translated literally. "Here is the fountain of mirth; here is the river which in itself contains mortal perils; here now it behooves us to restrain our desire, and in our resolve to be strong."

Page 74, line 3. **friars.** This word is derived from the Latin *frater*, and means brother. It was applied to members of the four mendicant orders: the Franciscans, commonly called Gray Friars, the Dominicans, or Black Friars, the Carmellites, or White Friars, and the Augustinians.

l. 10. *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III., Sc. 2.

l. 14. This passage is one of the most powerful and eloquent in the whole essay. The student should study it carefully, not

only to master the thought but to observe also its elements of strength. To what extent does his consummate art in the use of the antithetical and balanced sentences contribute to the strength of the passage?

Page 77, line 4. **Beatific Vision.** The inexpressibly glorious sight which shall break upon the soul when it comes to enter heaven. The book of Revelation is frequently called the "Beatific Vision."

l. 5. **Vane**, Sir Henry, (1612–1662), was leader of one of the extreme wings of the Puritan party. He was one of the twenty persons excepted from the general pardon upon the Restoration and was finally tried for treason and beheaded. His religious views were millenarian and gave rise to a small religious sect known as Vanists.

l. 7. **Fleetwood**, Charles, (1620–1661 [?]), was one of the prominent parliamentary generals and son-in-law of Cromwell. He was characterized by weakness and irresolution, and died in wretchedness and obscurity.

Page 78, line 9. **Sir Artegal's iron-man Talus.** Talus, an iron-man, representing the power of the state, was given to Sir Artegal by the goddess Astræa. He carried in his hand an iron flail with which he threshed out falsehood and unfolded truth. See the *Faerie Queene*, V., 1.

l. 24. **Dunstan**, St., (924–988), Archbishop of Canterbury, and a man of great ability and piety.

l. 24. **De Montfort**, Simon, (1150–1218), was a famous soldier who was appointed leader of the crusade against the Albigenses. He was noted for the severity and cruelty with which he conducted this war which resulted in the extermination of an

inoffensive people. His son became Earl of Leicester, in England, and is noted as the founder of the House of Commons.

l. 25. **Dominic**, St., (1170–1221). The founder of the Order of Dominicans.

l. 25. **Escobar**, y Mendozar, (1589–1669). A Spanish Jesuit celebrated especially for his doctrine that purity of intention justifies actions in themselves immoral or criminal.

Page 79, line 11. **careless Gallios.** See Acts xviii. 12–17.

l. 17. **Brissotines.** Followers of Jean Pierre Brissot, in the French Revolution, were advanced revolutionists, but were ultimately united with the Girondists.

Page 80, line 3. **Whitefriars** was an ancient precinct of London which derived its name from the church of the Carmelite monks, or White Friars. One portion of this district was for a long time a sanctuary for criminals.

l. 14. **Janissaries.** A body of Turkish infantry, constituting the Sultan's body-guard, and the nucleus of his standing army. It was first organized in the fourteenth century, but was abolished in 1826. The body became very large and turbulent and often controlled the policy of the government.

Page 81, line 2. **Duessa** (false faith). A character in the *Faerie Queene* opposed to Fidessa (true faith).

l. 3. **the Redcross Knight** represented St. George, who was deceived by Duessa, representing herself as Fidessa.

Page 82, line 10. See Milton's seventh sonnet.

Page 83, line 9. **Syrens.** Three sea-nymphs, whose usual abode was a small island near Cape Pelorus, in Sicily. They

enticed sailors ashore by their melodious singing and killed them.

l. 11. **Circe.** A sorceress who changed the companions of Ulysses into swine.

> "Who knows not Circe,
> The daughter of the sun, whose charméd cup
> Whosoever tasted lost his upright shape,
> And downward fell into grovelling swine."
>
> — *Comus.*

l. 18. The lines referred to are these: —

> "But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloisters pale,
> And love the high embowéd roof,
> With antic pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows, richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voiced choir below,
> In service high and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

Page 85, lines 7–11. See *Comus*, 815–819.

l. 22. **secular chain.** This expression is taken from Milton's sonnet to Cromwell, where he says:

> "new foes arise,
> Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains."

l. 23. **Presbyterian wolf.** Macaulay may have had in mind the 128th line of *Lycidas*,

> "Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
> Daily devours apace."

l. 25. **licensing system.** The treatise referred to was entitled, "Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England," and was published in 1644. This treatise was a powerful plea for freedom of thought and of its expression. It is regarded by most critics as Milton's prose masterpiece.

Page 86, line 2. **frontlets between his eyes.** The reference is to the old Jewish custom of wearing phylacteries on the forehead. See Exodus xiii. 9, 16; Deuteronomy xi. 18.

Page 87, line 4. At the present stage of civilization it seems very strange to find Milton posing not alone as the apologist for but even as the advocate of divorce. He wrote a ponderous tractate entitled, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce restored to the good of both sexes from the bondage of Canon Law and other mistakes to the true meaning of Scripture in the Law and Gospel compared." From a moral standpoint this was probably Milton's weakest work. It was no doubt inspired by his own domestic troubles, and was an attempt to modify public sentiment for personal considerations. All such efforts, no matter how specious the reasoning, must inevitably fail, as this has failed, to accomplish the end desired. It must be said, however, that this tractate contains the most exhaustive presentation of facts relating to the subject and the most thorough analysis of all the questions involved that has ever been presented. Indeed, he left practically nothing to be added.

It was followed by "The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce," "Tetrachordon," "Expositions upon the Four Chief Places in Scripture Which Treat of Marriage or Nullities in Marriage," and "Colasterion: A Reply to a Nameless Answer against the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce."

ll. 8–9. "Against opposing forces I contend; nor can that force, which subdues others, conquer me, and against the swiftly wheeling earth I ride."—Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II., 72, 73.

l. 15. **Burke**, Edmund, (1729–1797), one of the most distinguished of English statesmen, orators, and writers. He is generally conceded to be the greatest prose writer of the eighteenth century, and by some critics he is ranked as the greatest in all the range of English literature. In comparison with Macaulay's fulsome praise of Milton's prose works it will be interesting to read the views of another critic, also a stanch admirer of Milton and a sympathizer with his political views, Mr. Mark Pattison. He says: "In *Eikonoclastes* Milton is worse than tedious; his reply is in a tone of rude railing and insolent swagger which would have been always unbecoming, but which at this moment was grossly indecent." He speaks of Milton's prose pamphlets as being "a plunge into the depths of vulgar scurrility and libel below the level of average gentility and education."

Page 88, line 4. **Areopagitica.** Cf. p. 120.

l. 5. **Eikonoklastes.** In answer to a book entitled *Eikon Basilike*, "the portraiture of his sacred majesty in his solitude and sufferings."

Upon the execution of Charles I. a book entitled *Eikon Basilike* was published under his name. It contained a pathetic story of the life and sufferings of the "royal martyr," and was given a wide circulation. Parliament, fearing that it might be the means of inspiring new dissensions, and of enlisting the sympathies of the people for the royalist cause, authorized Milton to answer it. This answer was most effective, and although

intended by the author merely for a temporary purpose, has become a permanent contribution to English literature.

l. 6. "Treatise of Reformation in England and the causes that hitherto have hindered it."

l. 7. "Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's defence against Smectymnuus." The pamphlet which caused the preparation of this tractate, purporting to be written by Smectymnuus, was composed by five Presbyterian divines, the initials of whose names make up the pseudonym, and was directed against the Episcopacy. Bishop Hall replied in his "Defence of the Remonstrance." "Milton's formidable pen was now once more drawn in angry opposition to the prelate," and his "Animadversions on the Remonstrant's Defence" were thrown into the form of a dialogue, in which his adversary's book is made to ask questions which he answers with great vigor and in a bitterly controversial spirit.

Page 89, line 10. **Elwood**, Thomas. An interesting Quaker youth, and one of the few who remained faithful to Milton in his later days.

Page 90, line 8. **Massinger**, Philip (1584–1640). One of the best known of the minor Elizabethan dramatists. The *Virgin Martyr* was his first play.

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